

Unnamed

by astopperindeath

There's something about a Ministry dinner that makes Snape almost tell Hermione how he feels. That doesn't keep him from sleeping with her in the interim. A stream-of-conscious one-shot from Snape's POV. With, of course, the requisite lemons. AU/EWE. Voyeurism is portrait-voyerism and solely meant for a chuckle.

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Chapter 1 of 1

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There wasn't enough coffee in his mug to make this conversation bearable. Eventually Hermione would wake up and walk down the stairs into his kitchen. He couldn't deal with this right now. And anything he couldn't deal with would be something "they" would have to talk about.

They had not been having sex as often and had blithely chalked it up to stress and being too busy. But was that ever actually a reason? Had they, in fact, hit a point in their relationship (if he could even call it that) where their lack of sex was actually a sign of an even greater problem? And last night hadn't helped. He didn't find himself seeking her out in the library like he had when they had first started their... liaison. No more fucking her hard up against the stacks, Disillusioned and Muffliatoed, and reveling in the wrongness of their actions, the best part of which being that one of Albus' portraits hung above those stacks. That damned voyeur had to keep from yelling at him and from acting shocked, so as to not look crazy for yelling at nothing. He had found himself grinning up at the portrait like a madman, just because, even after death, he could still fuck with the old man.

Last night had started like so many other Ministry dinners...sitting at a table with Narcissa and Lucius, Draco and Astoria, and Harry and Luna. These dinners were always lavish affairs, with multiple courses of the finest cuisine, chased by bottomless glasses of alcohol. Each of these nights was the only night a year he would allow himself to drink more than a single glass of Firewhisky. These dinners brought up too many bad memories...memories he attempted to eradicate with the liquor he sipped. Hermione was, as usual, the consummate dinner guest; her conversation was as free-flowing as the wine she drank. As with all other Ministry dinners, this night ended with her having imbibed several glasses of wine, and of course a glass of port with pudding. It happened exactly this way every time.

He sat across the table from her, watching the evening unfold. He knew Hermione, and therefore he knew exactly what was coming. Hermione plus wine of any amount always equaled an extremely drunk, horny bookworm, which ninety percent of the time he could handle and frankly enjoyed handling. But it was that ten percent of the time that was completely up to chance. Sometimes she would just be an overly-affectionate drunk...affectionate to the point of nibbled earlobes and muffled sorries, made up for by the fact that she was still a warm, wet cunt within which he could find willing affection. Other times that ten percent would amount to nothing more than passionate snogging (did he just think the word snogging? So unsophisticated and...dare he think it...*muggle*) followed by her snoring into his shoulder. Or, on nights when they had both been drinking heavily, he would not be able to perform.

It was always the nights of the latter that were the hardest on him, as his inability to perform had nothing to do with his alcohol intake.

It was only the nights of these Ministry dinners that this would occur. These nights, where he would have just one more Firewhisky than anyone had any right to imbibe, let alone a recovering Death Eater with an agenda (said agenda being to fuck anything that would actually fuck him, let alone the available Mistress of the Library that seemed

to fancy him in spite of herself).

And yet, knowing better from their previous history, he would attempt to fuck her. Why? Mostly because she was willing. He had no delusions of loving her, hell, of even liking her all that much. She was nearly twenty years his junior, but there was something to be said for pert breasts showing no sign of sagging and pouting lips willing to be wrapped around the cock of this "war hero." Attempt was an important word; after these nights of his most terrifying stressors, he would invariably get too drunk and would end up in the same position.

Like all those other nights, he dragged her down the deserted alley near the phone booth outside Ministry headquarters and pulled her lush body parallel to his. But instead of his normal near-violent lovemaking, on all these nights he began by kissing her softly upon her lips. And, destined to fuck her, determined to make her scream, and deliberating within himself the manner in which he would accomplish both of those goals, he spun on that spot and Apparated her to Spinner's End.

Leading her up the stairs, he slowly peeled off her clothes...exposing inch upon inch of her delectable skin...soft to the touch, yet radiating power just under the surface. He pulled her close and whispered soft endearments into the top of her hair as he caressed her skin, verbalizing to her the level of passion that even the emotionless bat-of-the-dungeons could muster.

As always, they ended up in his bedroom, soft and luxurious despite all the rumors that he had left the house just as it was...he was a bit of a hedonist and loved the creature comforts of his own private space. Eventually they made it to the bed, and he laid over her, softly caressing her temples and her breasts. He slowly placed kisses down her stomach and navel, pausing over each peaked breast on his way due south. She was under him, writhing and screaming his name, his hand delving into her cunt, twisting and rubbing that one spot...the spot which he knew would leave her satisfied...well, as satisfied as a woman could get, at least in his mind, without a sizeable cock fucking her innermost parts. At the apex of her thighs, he tasted the essence that made her Woman...and he would know why he had brought her here.

He loved her.

And it was that realization every time, in his half-drunken stupor, which caused the inevitable, and this time was no different.

Let it be blamed on the wine, hell, let it be blamed on the Firewhisky. Just don't let it be blamed on his damnable brain and its overwhelming need to protect his emotions from his Gryffindor loves at all costs. It couldn't possibly be love, so why acknowledge it at this point?

It couldn't be love...that feeling that left his penis less than happy and ended with him mumbling along the lines of "I must have had too much to drink." Yearly he would realize this, and yearly she would smile and hold him as they slept. Given this was a yearly occurrence, he had no idea why she kept putting up with him.

Penance, he thought, as he drifted into sleep. It must be some sort of survivor's guilt, some fucked-up penance. The survivors of the War had each had their weird quirks: instead of blasting roses, he now blasted garden snakes; Harry's refusal to walk anywhere near King's Cross; and Longbottom's almost compulsive pursuit of a fencing career. Maybe Hermione just used him for some fucked up sense of fulfillment. Or maybe he just was missing something.

He awoke that morning knowing that they were finally going to have *that* conversation. Drinking his coffee, he wishes the mug had a bottomless charm on it. Hermione walks into kitchen, hair mussed and body wrapped in his bathrobe. She pads across the kitchen and kisses his forehead. Handing him a Hangover potion, she walks to the coffeepot.

He had planned his entire speech to her that morning...lots of clichés and lies, all necessary to keep his distance, to keep his emotions safe. He opens his mouth and cannot speak. He pauses and simply looks at her. She pours her coffee, looks at him and smiles. Quirking up the corner of her mouth, she walks back to the table and places a finger on his lips, quieting him before he has a chance to speak.

"I love you *too*, Severus," she says.

She walks away, carrying her coffee into the study.

And somehow he doesn't mind that she knows his secret.

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AN: Thanks so much to my beta, tonsinger, for her unparalleled support and suggestions. I haven't written in a long time, so any positive feedback and concrit would be appreciated! And, for the usual disclaimer: I own nothing from this universe, nor am I receiving any monetary dispensation for the publishing of this story.