

A Yuletide Reconciliation

by Aling

Someone breaks into Hermione's home on Christmas Eve.

One

Chapter 1 of 1

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A/N: I own neither Harry Potter, Hermione Granger, nor Severus Snape, despite my wishes to the contrary. Many thanks to slasher454 for the quick beta.

A lone candle flickered in the window at the top of the hill, a bright beacon for those who would seek shelter from the shadows of the forest.

Eager to enter the warmth of her home, Hermione quickened her footsteps. Her breath came out in sharp wisps of smoke, warm air meeting cold, and she shivered underneath her unbearably thin jacket. The winter was abnormally brisk this year; although no snow had fallen yet, it was freezing all the same.

With her eyes focused on the rough terrain, ever mindful of where she was stepping, Hermione never saw a looming silhouette move away from the softly illuminated window as she approached her house.

A flip of her hand released the wards over the fortified cottage, and the door flew open none too gently.

Hermione shrugged off her coat and turned to hang it on the stand. She had just retracted her hands when an unseen force spun her around and pushed her into the wall. She reached for her wand and tried to make out who was attacking her, but the darkness was impenetrable.

“What the fuck do you—mmmph!”

The unknown entity gently gripped her chin and seared her lips with a passionate kiss. Hermione stiffened, readying herself to *Stupefy* the cretin who dared to take such liberties with her. A faint whiff of his natural cologne, however, gave her pause. It took her a second, distracted as she was in trying to fend off the man's advances, but she was able to recognize the distinct, earthy scent of herbs and musk.

She relaxed into the man's embrace, slinging her arms around his neck and tilting her head for better access to his mouth. Her lips finally parted, giving him unspoken permission to deepen the kiss, and his tongue darted out to taste her. They searched and explored each other with fervor, using their bodies where words were inadequate.

After some length, they pulled apart—Hermione resting her forehead against his wiry chest—and tried to catch their breath in between gasps. A few minutes passed before she spoke.

“I could have hurt you.”

“I was counting on it.”

“Masochist,” was her fond reply.

He hummed in agreement. She could *hear* the smirk in his voice with his next sentence.

"I was rather disappointed when you so willingly ceased your poor attempts at self-defense."

Cheeky bastard.

Another lingering kiss, tasting faintly of cinnamon and dark chocolate now that she had time to savour it.

Finally, something clicked into place.

"What are you doing here? I'm still pissed off at you, for your information," Hermione snapped testily as she realized he was trying to distract her and succeeding.

"You wouldn't have us miss our first Yule together, would you?"

She pulled back in surprise.

"I thought you said—"

"Yes, well, I may have been... acting prematurely at the time."

Hermione looked up at him to gauge his sincerity. For him to make such an admission, however clumsily stated... But she couldn't detect any duplicity on the etched lines of his face, only reluctantly admitted remorse. Her lips curled up into a small smile.

"Indeed. So you've changed your mind, have you? I suppose I could forgive you, as long as you make it up to me somehow..."

The edges of his mouth quirked up smugly.

"That can be arranged."

Later that night—after a very satisfying feast of roasted duck and fingerling potatoes and a subsequent tumble in the sack—the last words Hermione heard before she drifted into a deep, sated slumber were a quietly murmured, "Happy Christmas," and a few seldom-uttered terms of endearment.

She snuggled closer into Severus's embrace and let sleep take her.