

# It's the Most Secretive Time of the Year

*by debjunk*

Christmas shopping for each other, Severus and Hermione meet unexpectedly.

## Oneshot

*Chapter 1 of 1*

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Severus Snape pocketed the engagement ring and hurried to the door of the jewelry store. In his desire to be quick, he failed to see Hermione Granger coming through it. He slammed into her and sent her reeling back. Reaching out, he steadied her and looked to her rather sheepishly.

"Sorry!" he said in his dark baritone. "I didn't see you there."

Hermione righted herself and blushed. "Oh, it's okay, Severus." She looked up at him. "What are you doing here, anyway?"

He stuttered for a moment, his mind racing wildly. "I was... getting an appraisal on some jewelry that my mother owned," he explained. His face, he knew, didn't show a sign of his deception. She would never know that he was planning to propose to her tonight... on Christmas eve.

Her eyebrows rose. "Oh." She seemed a bit disappointed.

"What, might I ask, are you doing here?" Severus asked darkly.

She began to shift uncomfortably. "I want some new earrings for our dinner tonight, Severus," she said nervously.

He eyed her sharply. He mulled over using Legilimency on her, but the last time he'd tried that, she hadn't spoken to him for a week, claiming that if he was so good at reading minds, he could damn well figure out for himself what she wanted of him.

"It's not really necessary," he replied.

"Severus, this is our first Christmas eve together. We've been dating for almost a year. It's necessary."

"Come now, you can't expect me to believe that you'd run out for earring on Christmas eve!"

She rolled her eyes. "It's easier to believe than you getting an appraisal on Christmas eve. I thought you said that your mother didn't leave you anything of value."

Severus' mind reeled. What could he tell her? He stared at her for a second before he saw her smile seductively.

"You got me a present, didn't you?"

*What do I say, what do I say?*

"I can only assume that you are here to get a gift of your own," Severus drawled. "Seeing that you didn't reveal that right away, I can only assume it is for me. I'd like to inform you now that I'm not into gaudy necklaces and the like."

Hermione laughed. "Nice try. You're not changing the subject so quickly." She came in closer to him and slid her arm into his. "What'd you get me?"

He rolled his eyes. "Really, Miss Granger, must you be so devilish?"

"Really, Mr. Snape, must you be so evasive?"

He tilted his head so it would be more in line with hers. "What did *you* get *me*?"

"I haven't gotten you anything, Severus Snape. And if you're not careful, I won't get you anything at all."

"Fine," he grouched.

She reached up and pulled him closer. Giving him a kiss on the cheek, she caressed his face.

"Now, don't get upset. I'm looking forward to tonight."

"You are evading me once again."

"If you must know, I'm buying something for Harry."

His face fell. "Harry? You are getting fine jewelry for Harry?"

"Severus! Just leave me be! I'll see you tonight!"

She literally pushed him out of the shop and slammed the door after him. He turned and had his hand on the doorknob, about to reenter, when he stilled. If she wanted to be secretive, it could only mean a gift for him. He'd let her get it without further argument. He smiled to himself as he turned and made his way down the road. He couldn't wait to see what it was, but he was even more excited to give Hermione her present.

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Severus opened the box. Two beautiful emerald cuff-links shaped like snakes sparkled up at him. He smiled and pulled Hermione close.

"I think you might have given me Harry's present," he whispered in her ear after kissing her.

"Very funny..." She was cut off by his lips on hers once again.

"Might I give you your present now?" Severus asked after they'd pulled apart.

"The one you got at the jewelry store?" Hermione asked slyly.

"Yes, witch, that one."

She eagerly moved closer to him with a smile. "Yes, please do!"

Severus moved off the couch and got on one knee. Hermione's mouth dropped open. He took her hand, which began to shake, and pulled the ring out of his robes.

"You are the only woman who has ever been able to see beyond what others see, Hermione. I never thought anyone would take the time to know me for who I am. I love you with all my heart. Would you please become my wife?"

Tears fell down Hermione's cheeks as she tried to speak. He felt a bit scared as she looked so very upset. Was this the right thing to do?

"Oh, yes, Severus, yes!"

He sighed in relief as he placed the ring on her finger. Before he realized it, Hermione had thrown herself into his arms. He couldn't hold his balance, and he went sprawling on the floor with Hermione on top of him.

"Oh! Sorry!" she cried.

He looked lovingly into her eyes. "You're just getting me back for almost knocking you over earlier, aren't you?"

She smiled down at him. "Maybe..."

"Vindictive witch!" he reverently whispered before pulling her to him and kissing her.

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*A/N: saraladydalian's prompt: Two characters see each other in shopping district while shopping for each other. What do they have to do to keep the other one (supposedly) unaware.*