

An Unusual Gift

by blue artemis

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Chapter 1 of 1

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What to do, what to do? Severus was worried. Hermione's birthday was coming up, and he had no idea what to do for her. He wanted it to be special; it was the tenth year after she had returned to the Shrieking Shack and saved him.

After his recovery, after her N.E.W.T.s, and after Hogwarts had been rebuilt and restaffed, they had discovered that the deep respect had turned to friendship, and that in turn led to more.

Oddly, their biggest support was Ron. Once he had decided that he and Hermione were better off as friends, he had tried to find her someone he thought was worthy. Unbelievably, he had settled on Snape. The two men still played chess together at least once a week, Severus's disdain of the redhead had diminished substantially, and he could almost bring himself to call Ron a friend, well, sometimes.

I guess I could ask him... he does know her better than anyone, thought Severus.

"Severus, are you thinking of asking me something, or is your stomach wonky?" asked Ron.

"I'm thinking, you imbecile. What would make you think my stomach is, what did you say? Wonky?"

"The look on your face. You were either deep in thought or constipated."

Severus looked at his friend and sighed.

"And you wonder why I don't proclaim our friendship to the world."

"So, Sev, what is it?" Ron rather good-naturedly ignored Severus's dramatics.

"What in the world do I get Hermione for her birthday? It isn't like we need anything, and she can buy herself most of the things she wants."

"Easy-peasy, mate. Just do or make something for her that means something special to the two of you. Even better if no one else would get it without an explanation. Her favorite gift from me was a teaspoon I filled with sugar and put some netting over that and a bow on it."

"Why would you give her a teaspoon... never mind, I don't want to know," responded Severus, remembering that he had seen that teaspoon on Hermione's treasure shelf.

Severus walked home from the weekly chess match deep in thought. *What would be meaningful to just the two of us, something she could show off or put on that treasure*

shelf?

As he walked, he went past a patch of moon-flowers. *I remember the first time I showed those to her; it was the first birthday she celebrated after the N.E.W.T.s* Severus smiled at the memory. He stopped to pick some; they were good for the Relaxation potion Hermione liked to put in her bath.

He got home and took the flowers into the lab. On his workbench was a package with some books he had ordered. The company tended to include a bonus book for their favorite customers with large orders. Today's bonus was *Permanent Preservation Potions and Their Various Uses* Severus looked thoughtful for a moment, then sat down to read.

The morning of Hermione's birthday, Severus looked quite pleased with himself as he placed a box next to her place setting. His wife came down to breakfast, smiled sleepily at him, and took the mug of coffee he handed her gratefully. She sat in her chair, then noticed the box. She looked up at him.

"Go on, open it!"

"Certainly, Severus." Hermione opened the box, and in it she found a lovely beaded necklace with what appeared to be charms of some sort. As she examined the item more closely, Severus saw the realization of what it was cross her face. A few seconds after that, he had his arms full of a very happy wife.

He sat down at the table with Hermione in his lap.

"Did you make that yourself, my love?"

"Yes. Did you note the significance of the charms?"

"How could I miss it? The moonflower for my first birthday, after we became friends. The peony mouse from the second, when we started dating. The kitten from the third, when you gave me Speckles after Crooks passed. The cauldron from the fourth, after I got my Mastery. The ring, from the fifth, after you proposed. The replica of the house from the sixth, after we moved in. The miniature sign from the shop we opened from the seventh. The Coliseum from our vacation to Rome on my eighth. The falling star from the meteor shower we watched last year. And for this year, a cradle... Severus, how did you know? I was going to surprise you!"

"Don't worry, love, you did. And I'm so very pleased. I hope you liked your gift."

"Liked it? I will treasure it for always."

Prompt from twilexis: It's Hermione's birthday.

Due to potion patents and stipends from the Order of Merlins, the Snape's are not short of money by a long shot. What can a husband get for his wife when she has everything she could ever want?

All more than 500 words, no more than 1000.

A/N: I based this on the gift my husband gave me from our son last year. He made me a natural pearl necklace, but it had an interesting pattern on it. He then gave me a key. Turns out some of the beads were dots, and some were dashes. It spells out, "I love you Momma, Nicholas."

A/N2: Thank you to Penny for the beta!