

An Unexpected Gift

by debjunk

Severus isn't expecting Hermione to give him anything for Christmas.

Oneshot

Chapter 1 of 1

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The present sat on his desk as he glowered at it. It was wrapped in sickening Gryffindor red. There was a golden bow sitting in the middle of the package. He frowned at its cheeriness.

He frowned harder at the method in which he was given the present. *She* had given it to him. *She* had knocked on his door and held it out to him, blushing three shades of red. *She* had turned abruptly and rushed off after placing it in his hand.

After their argument earlier today, he had been shocked that the woman had even come down to the dungeons, let alone given him a gift. He stared down at it once again. His hand reached out, then stilled. What if it was some sort of trap? He would deserve that, wouldn't he? After what he'd said today, he deserved much worse.

"Severus, you're sure you don't need me to stay and help with the Banesbrew?" Hermione asked.

"Granger, I do not need your constant mothering! Get out of my lab, and don't return until tomorrow!"

Hermione looked hurt by his snapping. "Tomorrow is Christmas."

He waved his hand in dismissal. "Then the next day! Just get out, and leave me alone."

"I was just trying to..."

He turned and glared at her. "I don't want your help. How difficult is that for you to understand? I've been trying to convince you of that for the last six months."

Her face went white, and her eyes widened in shock. She turned and ran out of the room.

He sighed. When it came to Hermione Granger, he always felt wrong-footed. That awkwardness usually resulted in him snapping at her, which resulted in hurt feelings on her part. They played at that dance at least once a week.

Now she'd decided to give him a Christmas gift. *Yes, it's probably some Hex-in-a-box* he mused.

His hand slowly moved to the gift. A finger drew itself across the satiny paper and over to the bow.

Merlin, what are you waiting for? Get it over with! Whatever she's going to curse you with probably won't kill you.

He grabbed the box and drew it close, pulling the ribbon off quickly. The red paper was soon crumpled and thrown on the floor. He stared down at the white box. *Now or never, Snape.*

He lifted the lid and peered in. No hex shot out at him. He arched an eyebrow. A lump of coal wasn't staring up at him. Instead, he found a folded piece of paper lying in the box. The paper slowly rose and began to unfold. It twisted itself around until it formed a rose, which turned in the air in front of his face. Severus watched in amazement as one by one, the petals fell to the desk. Each one burst into small flames until there was a bit of smoke curling up in front of him. His eyes widened as the smoke formed words.

Push me away all you want, Severus. I will still care for you... always.

The smoke dissipated, leaving Severus staring at the ashes gathered on the desk. He didn't move; he barely breathed as he marveled at her message. This was more than he could hope for. His heart beat rapidly in his chest as her message and its meaning sunk deeply into his heart. For the first time in years, he felt alive. For the first time in years, he felt he could possibly love again. Standing quickly, he turned and headed out the door to her and his future.

The End

Prompt by Amita: Severus gets a present or presents.

Many thanks to Lisa for the amazing rose idea!