

If Wishes Were Fishes

by debjunk

Severus comes face-to-face with his fairy godmother. Will he accept her offer to grant a wish? More importantly... will his wish come true?

Chapter 1

Chapter 1 of 7

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Chapter One

If wishes were horses,

Beggars would ride;

If wishes were fishes,

We'd all have some fried.

--Scottish Proverb

Severus Snape glared at the throng. Students covered the floor of the Great Hall, paired off into couples. They swirled and curtsied and twirled around the dance floor.

A disgusting display!

Thankfully, these dances didn't happen too often. It just meant extra work for him, having to rustle up juvenile couples hidden away trying to get a quick snog. When they weren't hiding behind curtains or in carriages, they were pressed together on the dance floor. It was almost as bad as the actual snogging, the way they were plastered onto each other. *Why does the Headmaster insist on having these forays? They're nothing but trouble.*

"Severus," Albus' voice interrupted his thoughts. "Would you care to dance?"

Severus' head snapped over to the Headmaster's, and he looked at him with a wild expression.

"... with Minerva," Albus finished.

Severus visibly let out a breath as he looked past Albus to see Minerva grinning at him. She appeared to be enjoying his discomfiture. Severus scowled at her, then at Albus.

"No, thank you," he answered tersely. "I was about to go check the carriages for wayward students."

With that, he turned and stalked out of the Great Hall, leaving the two older professors chuckling after him.

All the carriages had been examined, and two couples had been flushed out. Severus stood in the courtyard, eyeing the now empty carriages. A smirk of triumph graced his face as his arms crossed in front of him. He knew it would only be a matter of time before the carriages had new occupants, though. He sighed. This night would never end!

Oh, how I wish there were never any balls or dances here at Hogwarts!

As Severus finished his wish, he saw some lights twinkling in the air. He glanced up as the lights merged together to form a ball of blue light. The ball lowered itself until it was directly in front of Severus, then transformed into a woman dressed in an ethereal, white, floor-length gown. She held a very long wand in her hand. It must have measured almost 24 inches. It also glowed a bright blue. Severus arched an eyebrow at the intruder as he quickly extracted his wand and pointed it into her face.

"Now, that's no way to treat your fairy godmother!" the woman exclaimed. As she did, her long, blonde hair waved around her head and her blue eyes twinkled at him.

Severus debated what to do. Without removing his wand from her direction, he drilled her. "Who are you? Why are you here? How did you get past the wards to Apparate in?"

The woman giggled, her high-pitched voice melodically laughing aloud. "So many questions!" she cried.

"You will answer every one!" Severus demanded.

The woman gave him a put-out look. "Very well," she pouted. "As I've already said, I'm your fairy godmother. I am here because you made a wish. I didn't Apparate here, per se. Fairy godmothers simply appear and disappear at will. Magical wards have no affect on us."

Severus sneered. "I am to believe that you just appeared out of nowhere?"

The fairy nodded. "Exactly!"

Severus huffed. "There are no such things as fairy godmothers!"

"Well, that's absurd. If there were no such things, then I wouldn't be here, now would I?"

"Who are you?" Severus asked in exasperation.

"My name is Arista."

"And you are my *fairy godmother*?"

Arista brightened. "Yes, that's right."

"And you came here because I made a wish?"

"Yes! That's exactly right!"

"I wished for nothing! I don't have any idea what you're talking about."

"Oh, but you did! You said... and I quote... *Oh, how I wish there were never any balls or dances here at Hogwarts!*"

Severus sputtered. "I... I..." He gave her a look of defeat. "I guess I did *think* that," he muttered.

"Exactly. So, here I am to grant you your wish."

Severus' head snapped up. "You are going to grant me that wish?"

Arista's eyes grew wide again, and she nodded her head.

"Do I have a choice in the matter?" Severus snapped.

Arista's head tilted to the side, and she gave Severus a quizzical look. "Whatever do you mean? You wished for there to be no dances at Hogwarts. Why would you decide differently?"

"Let's just suppose for a minute," Severus said as he finally lowered his wand. "... that everything you have said is the truth. You are here to grant me a wish. If you were me, would you waste that wish on banishing dances from Hogwarts?"

Arista's eyebrows furrowed as she thought about it. "I don't know. No one has ever asked me such a question. I grant wishes. I don't make them!"

"Humor me and put yourself in my place."

She looked into his eyes. "I suppose that would seem rather silly given all of the possible things I could wish for."

"Exactly my point," Severus drawled. "In this fairy rule book you must live by, is it possible for me to change my wish?"

"Well," Arista muttered. Her hand came up to her chin, and her finger tapped her lips. "It's never been done before, but since the wish hasn't been granted, I suppose it will be all right."

"Lovely," Severus drawled. "Thank you for your time... now leave!"

Arista, once again with her eyes huge as saucers, began to sputter. "But... but... you haven't made a wish yet!"

"Listen, madam, I don't know where you came from, nor do I know how someone mental like you escaped from St. Mungo's, but you need to leave immediately!"

Severus grabbed Arista's arm and began to lead her toward the entry gates.

"No! You can't throw me out!"

"Actually, I can, and I am."

Arista wrenched her arm free. "I only mean that if you throw me out, I will just come right back."

Severus scowled. "I am willing to test that theory." He grabbed her arm again and shoved her along the pathway to the gate. Arista complained all the way.

"Really! This is no way to treat your fairy godmother! I should just leave you to yourself and forget about your wish... but that's not how things are done. Unhand me this

instant! Please, I have to do my job!"

They reached the gate, which Severus opened with a flick of his wand. He shoved the madwoman through them and closed them with a loud clang.

"Please stay away from Hogwarts, madam. The children do not need to see insanity on a night where there should be celebrations."

With that, Severus turned and stalked back to the castle. He grumbled to himself as he quickly went along the path. As he returned to the courtyard, the shimmering lights reappeared, formed a light-ball, and transformed into Arista a second time.

Severus scowled. His wand pointed into Arista's face once again. "I thought I told you to leave!"

Arista smiled warmly at him. "Well, I thought I told you that I need to grant you a wish."

"Madam, you are to leave immediately, or I will be forced to hex you!"

Arista giggled. "Silly Severus! Your magic has no affect on me!"

"We'll see about that!" Severus said menacingly. With a flick of his wand, an orange light shot from it, directly into Arista's chest. Severus grinned evilly until he realized nothing had happened. His grin turned into a frown as he shot another hex at the woman in front of him. Again, nothing happened. He tried once more with no result before lowering his wand and glowering at Arista.

"Are you through?" she asked cheerfully.

"Who are you?" Severus growled.

"I told you already. I'm Arista, your fairy godmother."

"Prove it!"

Arista grinned widely. "I thought you'd never ask." She flicked her wand, and an image appeared in front of them. Severus was shocked to see himself as a small boy, cowering in the corner, tears spilling out of his eyes. He remembered this scene well. He had just witnessed his father beat his mother so severely she'd had to go to the hospital. His father had told Severus that he'd kill his mother if he said anything to anyone about what he'd seen. Severus had run to his room and fled to the corner. There was something about being surrounded by those four walls that had made him feel safe. Severus gazed at the image of his younger self in hysterics. Suddenly, a woman appeared next to his image. It was Arista. She put her arms around him and let the boy sob into her shoulders. She coo'd to him that everything would be all right until the boy's tears had stopped and he'd fallen asleep.

The vision disappeared, only to be replaced by a similar one. This time the young boy was writhing on his bed, punching his pillow in frustration. Arista appeared and laid down next to him, pulling the little boy into a hug. She waved her wand over him, and he fell into a peaceful sleep.

"I thought I was dreaming," Severus murmured.

Arista smiled. "I used a spell to make you think that, Severus. It would do no good if you were to spout off about a woman coming into your room to give you hugs when you were upset. We fairy godmothers work that way a lot."

Severus gave her a sharp look. "How many are you?"

"Quite a few. Everyone has a fairy godmother, but we fairies have multiple people we watch over."

Severus pinched the bridge of his nose. "This is rather difficult to swallow," he grumbled.

Arista laughed her melodic laugh once again. "I know! That's what everyone says when they meet us. Granted, few actually meet us. We are supposed to stay invisible unless there is a wish request that we can grant."

"Like mine," Severus interjected.

"Exactly!" Arista spun around and grasped her wand in both hands. "Have you decided what you'd like to change it to?"

Severus narrowed his eyes at her. "You really are a fairy godmother?" Arista nodded. "And you can grant me a wish?" She nodded again. "And it can be anything I desire?"

Another nod. "So, if I wished for world peace, you would do that?" Arista smiled and nodded again. "Has anyone ever asked for that?"

Arista tilted her head. "You know, it's never come up."

Severus scoffed. "We are all out for ourselves, aren't we?"

"Well," Arista mulled. "I think people just have more personal desires that come first."

Severus nodded. He thought to himself. *A wish. Any wish. What would I wish for? What do I want in my life?* A pang shot through his body. He'd only ever wanted one thing and had never succeeded in getting it. He looked up to Arista with a determined glare.

"I want to be loved," he stated flatly.

"Oh, Severus, you're already loved."

"No... I'm not. I have never been loved, not even by my parents. I want to feel appreciated and loved for who I am."

Arista nodded. "I can grant that wish, if you'd like. I must warn you, though; the person who will love you may be someone you do not expect. You might not like the result."

"It will be a woman, correct?"

Arista giggled. "Yes, Severus, it will be a woman. But you may be surprised at which woman it is."

"Any woman would be most welcome."

"Come now, Severus, surely there are some women in this world that would send shivers down your spine if they showed an attraction to you."

Mental images of Sybill Trelawney and Dolores Umbridge came into Severus' mind. He shuddered.

"Will this woman be someone whose affections I wouldn't want?"

Arista's wand tip tapped at her chin. "No... it will just be someone unexpected."

"Will you be forcing someone to fall in love with me? That's no better than being unloved."

"No, Severus. Your wish just opens a door that was not available before. This woman already has a high respect for you and likes you quite well. The wish will just open both of you to other possibilities."

Severus looked to the ground. His mind was a whirlwind. What should he do? He folded his arms in front of him, but did not look up. "She's not a hag?"

"No, Severus, she's quite pretty."

"It is someone who would be suited to me?"

"Yes, Severus. There could be no love between you without you suiting one another."

"And she will not be forced into anything?"

"A fairy never forces. She just opens doors and helps people recognize possibilities."

"She will love me for who I am?"

"Part of her already does."

"Who is it?"

"I'm sorry, Severus. I cannot tell you."

"Will you tell me when the wish is granted?"

"I will do better than that! I will show her to you."

"What do I do to make the wish?"

"You need only say what you want, Severus."

He sighed and looked into Arista's eyes. Could this possibly be true? Could he really find love after a lifetime of solitude? It was worth a shot.

"I wish to have someone love me for who I am. Someone who will respect me, and whom I will respect. I wish to have someone who will be my soul mate."

Arista smiled and lifted her wand over Severus' head. She circled his head with it, and fairy dust poured out of her wand and onto his black hair. It shimmered blue in the moonlight.

"There," Arista said. "It's done."

Severus looked at Arista tentatively. "Will you tell me now who this woman is?"

"Why don't I just show you! Turn around! She just came out into the courtyard."

With her announcement, Arista disappeared. Severus stared at the place where she'd just been standing in amazement. Her words finally sunk in, and he realized that the woman who was to fall in love with him was somewhere right behind him. Did he really want to know who it was? A resounding 'yes' reverberated through his mind. He turned. There was only one other person out in the courtyard. His breath caught in his throat.

The woman held her hands in front of her as she slowly walked towards him. She grinned at him and came a bit closer. Severus was astonished. How could this woman ever fall in love with him? She was so young and vibrant. The fairy must have been mistaken. What could they have in common?

"Severus, I wondered where you'd gone. You're leaving the rest of us teachers to do your dirty-work in catching snogging students."

He simply stared at her with his mouth agape. The woman tilted her head and looked at Severus curiously.

"Severus, is everything all right?"

Severus sighed and accepted his fate. Looking to the Charms professor, he finally answered her. "Everything is fine, Hermione."

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Chapter 2

Chapter 2 of 7

Severus deals with the revelation of who his 'soul mate' is.

Chapter 2

Severus' head spun as he gazed upon Hermione Granger. This was the woman who was to fall in love with him... *as he was?* That fairy was bonkers. How could Hermione Granger ever love him? Severus felt the sudden urge to giggle. He couldn't hide the smirk that crossed his face.

"What's so funny, Severus?" Hermione asked, her own lips turning up into a grin.

"Oh, nothing. I was just thinking of something someone said to me recently."

Hermione nodded as she scanned the courtyard.

"Have you checked all the carriages?" she asked Severus.

"Yes, I did." He stared down at her, not saying anything more.

"Honestly," Hermione said as she got closer to Severus and lowered her voice. "I was a bit bored, so I thought I'd see if you'd found anything interesting out here."

"Really, Hermione, I would think that you would be on the dance floor continuously. The students can't get enough of you."

Hermione nodded. "I know! My feet hurt!" She winced visibly. "I can see why you aren't fond of these get-togethers, Severus."

"Why would that be?" Severus asked with an arched eyebrow.

"With so many dunderheads in one room, there's no room for the intelligent people to shine."

Severus stared at her, dumbfounded. Hermione looked over at him and doubled over in laughter. Finally, she straightened up. "I'm sorry," she said in between gasps for breath. "I probably shouldn't try to lump myself in with you, but honestly, the idle chatter about nothing that's going on in there is driving me insane!"

Severus didn't know what to say. He cleared his throat instead. Hermione was beginning to look a bit flustered. He needed to speak now or she'd think she'd upset him.

"That's one of the reasons I patrol the halls during these functions. I'm invariably asked some stupid question by some buffoon. As if I have any interest whatsoever in jellied currants or the trend in Wizarding robes these days."

Hermione settled down, obviously feeling that he wasn't offended. She stepped even closer to Severus. "Do you know what one of those boys asked me?"

Severus shook his head.

"He asked if I was available to date. He spent five minutes reciting his pure-blood pedigree and then asked me to consider his hand in marriage. The boy is fourteen!"

Severus smirked. Boy or not, he had good taste. "Did you accept his proposal?"

Hermione stared at him for a minute. "What?"

Might as well take the plunge. The fairy seems to think this will work. "His proposal, did you accept? I want to know who my competition is."

Hermione frowned. "That's not funny at all. I really don't appreciate you making fun of my ability to find a decent man to date." With an exasperated huff, Hermione turned and stalked away.

Severus watched her re-enter the school. *So much for that. Soul mate indeed!*

Severus spent the rest of the evening grumpily patrolling the halls. The students he found paid dearly for their secret trysts.

Severus' eyes cracked open. He looked around his dimly lit bedroom. He wondered what had awakened him until he heard a noise. It was a woman singing. Well, she was humming.

Why is a woman humming in my bedroom?

Severus sat up and said, "*Lumos*." The room was filled with light, and Severus was surprised to see his fairy, Arista, gliding around the room, waving her arms and humming. When the lights came on, Arista stopped.

"Oh! You're finally awake. How did it go with Miss Granger last night?"

Severus groaned. He didn't bother to ask how Arista had gotten into his bedroom. "I think you were mistaken about her. Is there anyone else who could possibly fall in love with me?"

Arista looked puzzled. She glanced at her wand and spun it in a small circle. A puff of green smoke came from the tip. She stared into the smoke for a few seconds before beaming up at Severus.

"No, Severus, she's the one."

"You're daft, Fairy. She can't stand me."

Arista giggled. "Oh, you are so wrong! She fancies you. She just doesn't know it yet."

Severus looked at Arista crossly. "How could she fancy me and not know it?"

"Well, dear, the woman always has her nose in books. She barely looks up to see what's going on around her."

"She spends a bit of time reading, but she does not always have her nose in books."

Arista smiled. It was a knowing smile. She seemed to be pleased that Severus had said what he had.

"Why are you smiling like that?" Severus demanded.

Shrugging her shoulders, she smiled wider. "I'm just happy. That's all."

"Arista, there is no way she could ever love me. I was too cruel to her during her school days. She knows what a terrible man I can be. She could never get past all that to find anything attractive in me."

Arista moved to the bed and sat down facing Severus. She gripped his hand and squeezed it.

"You don't know her very well, do you?"

"Well, she's been teaching here for a couple of years. We chat at dinner and occasionally work together to chaperone Hogsmeade weekends. Other than that, I haven't spent much time with her. I suppose I don't know her as well as I could."

"Hermione Granger is a very special person, Severus. As you get to know her, you will find that out."

"I suppose you wouldn't care to explain?"

Arista giggled. "Why no, silly. Part of the intrigue of courtship is learning about the person you're interested in."

"So, you wouldn't want to help me out?"

She giggled again, this time her voice rising very high. The woman sounded as if she'd sucked on helium.

"There's no fun in that. Besides, you didn't want either one of you coerced in any way." She took her hand and pointed at Severus' chest. "You must find out about Hermione Granger. And you must let her find out about you. I will give you one suggestion, though. Tell her about me and your wish."

Severus grasped the hand that was digging into his chest and placed it back in Arista's lap. "You really are nutters, aren't you? She will think me daft if she heard this story."

"No, she won't!"

"What reality do you live in?"

Arista stood and clasped her hands together. "A magical reality where everything works out as it should."

Severus stood up, ignoring the fact that he was only dressed in a pair of black silk boxers.

"Well, I live in this world. In this world, Severus Snape telling a woman that they are destined to fall in love with him because his fairy godmother told him so is a world where Severus Snape gets locked away in the mental ward!"

The musical laugh flew from Arista's lips once again. Did this woman ever stop laughing?

"Oh, Severus, really. You are so melodramatic!"

"Melodramatic? Me?" He stomped over to his wardrobe and with a flourish, pulled a set of black robes out of them. Fixing her with an indignant glare, he continued. "I may be many things, but melodramatic is *not* one of them!"

Arista chuckled and shook her head. "Very well, you win. Nonetheless, if you want things to work out with Hermione, you must tell her of our visit."

Severus buttoned up his frock coat viciously. "Why? Why can't we just get together like *normal* people?" he said with much too much emphasis on the word 'normal.'

Arista moved elegantly to his side. She buttoned his top buttons for him and smoothed out his coat.

"Because, my dear, neither of you is normal. You are both spectacular so your relationship should be spectacular."

"So, convincing Hermione that I'm mental will make for a spectacular beginning of our relationship?" Severus asked caustically.

"That's right," Arista said, not really paying attention to exactly what Severus had said. After a second, she glanced up at him, looking a bit sheepish. "You see, by you telling her of our conversation, it makes for something spectacular. She won't think you're mental, Severus."

"She probably already thinks I'm mental after last night."

"Do you mean that sad attempt at flirting? Dear, what did you expect? You try to be suave when she's upset by a fourteen-year-old. Besides, why would she take you seriously? You've hardly paid her any attention prior to that."

"So, you're saying it would be better to jump right in and tell her that she'll fall in love with me and that we will be soul mates? How does that make any sense?"

Arista turned with a flourish. "It will tell her that there's a reason why you're suddenly interested in her."

"Should I propose today, too? Maybe we should just get married this afternoon, hmm? None of that will seem odd, in any case, after my incredible tale."

Arista turned back to him and frowned. "Now you're just being difficult. Severus, I know you like to hide behind your sarcasm, so I'm not offended, but you need to trust me."

"Do you not understand my reservations?" he sneered.

"I'll tell you what. If it doesn't go well, I'll just have a chat with her."

"Yes, I'm sure that will fix *everything*."

Arista spun around, her hair floating around her. She truly looked ethereal in that moment.

"It will help," she said when she'd stopped spinning.

Severus clenched his fists. He'd had enough of flighty fairies for one day. "Arista, this is absurd! I will not tell her anything. As a matter of fact, I don't even think I'll try to pursue anything with her. It's bound to lead to tragedy."

"There you go, being melodramatic again."

"I am not melodramatic!" he snarled.

"Then why is this such a drama?" Arista asked.

Severus glowered at her.

"You need to learn to be laid back, Severus. Take things as they come!"

"If I took things as they came, I would be dead a thousand times over. It is my ability to anticipate actions that has saved my life time and time again!"

She moved toward him and quickly spun around behind him. "Yes, that was while the war was being fought. The war's over now!" Turning quickly again, she came around his other side and faced him. "Learn to live a little. Take risks!"

Severus snorted. "My whole life has been a series of risks!"

"But those risks were for others! You did everything for others! Take a risk for yourself, Severus. Put your heart on your sleeve and see what she does! So what if you get embarrassed? Won't it be worth it to look back on this and see a wonderful relationship built on trust and love? Isn't that what you want?" Her hands grabbed Severus' upper arms, and she shook him slightly. "Then do it! Seize the day!"

Severus scowled at her. "You are far too chipper for your own good. Do you realize that?"

Arista giggled and released his arms. "Don't you trust me, Severus?"

"I barely know you!"

"Not true!" she cried. Her finger quickly shot up to his face, and she pointed directly at his nose. "I have been there for you through all your hardships, you just didn't remember, or recognize me when you did remember. I know you better than your own mother does!"

"That wouldn't be hard," Severus grumbled.

"Now, now, she tried her best. The woman was in a terrible situation."

Severus threw up his hands. "I know that! I lived that, remember? This isn't about my mum, it's about me. It's about me finding happiness. I don't see how my telling Hermione about you can bring about that happiness."

Arista's shoulders slumped. "You don't get it, do you?"

"Obviously."

"A relationship... a *good* relationship... must start with trust. If you keep this from her, it will eventually get out. That will mar anything that you've built up to that point. Does that make any sense to you?"

Severus looked to the floor. He felt duly chastised by this fairy that did nothing but dance around and laugh all the time. He looked back up at her.

"Yes, it does. It makes perfect sense. You're right, of course, there must be trust. I will have to tell her, but she will think I'm daft!"

"She won't if she sees me after you tell her."

"I thought I was the only one who could see you."

"Fairies can make exceptions if it's for a good cause."

"I suppose it would be good to know someone else can see you and that I'm not really going bonkers."

Arista laughed. "You know I'm real, Severus. Quit trying to rationalize me away."

Severus frowned. "You are impossible!"

Chapter 3

Chapter 3 of 7

Severus decides to tell Hermione the truth.

Chapter 3

Severus paced back and forth, back and forth. The scene of his pacing was carefully chosen. It was right in front of Hermione Granger's door. Back and forth he went with his hands clasped behind him. He would go five paces, twirl, and then pace off five more. His robes flew behind him, although the effect was minimized by his clasped hands, which prevented the cape from wildly thrashing about. He reached his turning point and twirled again. He stopped short when Arista appeared in front of him, seemingly from nowhere.

"Severus, just knock on the door!" she said cheerily as she motioned to Hermione's door.

Severus turned and glared at the door as if it had offended him in some way. He turned back to Arista.

"What am I supposed to say?" he demanded.

Arista spun her wand around his head. "There... That will give you the confidence you need to say what you have to."

"I'd prefer to say nothing and leave it at that."

"Oh, I know," Arista assured him. "Unfortunately, you'll never find true love with that attitude." She grasped his shoulders and turned him so he was facing the door. "Now, knock and get it over with."

Severus sighed. "Very well," he acquiesced. He lifted his fist to rap on the door just as Arista disappeared from view. He began to shift back and forth on his feet while he awaited Hermione's answer.

I didn't feel this nervous when confronting the Dark Lord.

He stopped his shifting and stood still as the door opened to reveal Hermione.

"Severus! What a nice surprise. Come in!" Hermione gestured for him to enter and closed the door after he swept by her.

She smiled genuinely at him. "What brings you here? I can't remember the last time you dropped by."

Severus began shifting again. He looked to the floor. "Umm..."

Hermione gave him a quizzical look. She motioned to a flowery armchair. "Please, have a seat."

Severus turned and went to the chair. He sat and stared straight ahead. Hermione settled in the equally flowery couch that was perpendicular to the arm chair. She rested her elbow on the arm of the chair and looked expectantly at Severus.

Severus cleared his throat. He tapped his foot and cleared his throat again. He glanced sheepishly at Hermione. "I wanted to tell you of an experience I had on the night of the ball."

Hermione lifted her eyebrows, but said nothing. Severus cleared his throat again. Swallowing hard, he decided to just say all of it. He quickly told Hermione how Arista had appeared before him from nowhere.

Hermione listened attentively, nodding in all the right places.

Severus explained how Arista had told him he'd made a wish and that she was there to grant it. He explained the changing of his wish.

Hermione quietly listened and watched Severus. He looked down often, seemingly embarrassed. The spell Arista had placed over him, though, kept him talking, even though he'd much rather make a break for the door and escape with some dignity intact.

He looked up into Hermione's eyes. She was hanging on every word.

"The wish I chose involves you to some extent."

"Me?" Hermione asked incredulously. "What exactly did you wish for, Severus?"

Severus cleared his throat. He sat staring at her for a while. The spell urged him to speak, but he could not find the voice.

Hermione urged him on as well. "Tell me, Severus. I'll help if I can."

Severus gave a wry bark of a laugh. "You must understand, Hermione, when I wished, I had no idea you would be involved."

Hermione nodded her head. "Go on."

Severus grimaced. "I wished to find love. I wished for someone to love me for who I am. My wish was granted. Only then was I told that you were the one who would love me in that way."

Hermione tried to say something, but nothing would come out of her mouth. She stood up and wandered to the window. Severus watched as she folded her arms and stared out of the window in front of her. After what seemed like an eternity to Severus, Hermione turned back to him.

"I am supposed to fall in love with you?" she asked dubiously.

Severus nodded his head.

Hermione's shoulders sagged. She gave Severus a sad look, as if he were some pathetic puppy dog that she would have to abandon.

"Severus, fairies don't exist," she said quietly.

Severus looked at her haughtily. "Of course they do, or I would not have seen one! Besides, Flitwick is constantly using entire colonies to decorate the Christmas trees every holiday."

Hermione pursed her lips. "I didn't mean those types of fairies, Severus. I'm fully aware of those tiny annoyances. They constantly get caught in my hair every Christmas. They're not the same as the fairies you're talking about. You're speaking of fairies that are full-sized, wand-waving, wish-granting fairies. They just don't exist. They're simple figments of the imagination."

Severus frowned at her. "Are you accusing me of seeing things?"

Hermione walked to her bookshelf and located a book. She pulled it off the shelf and flipped through the pages for a minute. She stopped when she'd found what she was looking for. Going back to the couch, she sat and showed Severus the page.

FAIRY-WITCHES

Although the smaller variety of fairy is common in the magical world, the larger variation, or fairy-witch, does not exist. Their existence is simply a legend created by a Muggle storyteller in ancient times. The magical world fell in love with the idea of wish-granting and embraced the imaginary creature as one of their own.

There is no proof that human-sized fairies actually exist. Usually when one claims to have seen one, it is a hallucination. Medical attention is suggested for the victims of such sightings as they have probably been under a great deal of stress and need professional care.

Severus' lips thinned as he read the passage. Looking back at Hermione, he frowned deeply.

"I think you were seeing things, Severus."

Severus' voice was soft as he replied. "I know this seems far-fetched, Hermione, but I swear it's real."

"The evidence here shows that it is not. Besides, Severus, how do you expect me to believe what you're saying? You're trying to convince me that you want a relationship with me, but you can hardly stand me, and I simply tolerate you." She shook her head. "I don't get your angle."

"There is no angle. I was as surprised as you when I found out. I told Arista that you would never think it possible."

"So, this figment of your imagination has a name, now?"

Severus huffed in frustration. "I swear to you, Hermione, she's real. She's willing to show herself to you."

"Severus, I think you need to chat with Poppy."

"Hermione, please, give it a chance. It makes sense when you stop and think about it."

Hermione gave a quick laugh. "When I think about it, I'm only more convinced that you need a vacation, Severus. How can you think we would work? We are from two different generations. You're snide and hurtful, and I get my feelings hurt much too quickly to bear your tirades."

"I know I can be distant and sharp, but Hermione, we have much in common." Severus pointed to her bookshelf, which encompassed an entire wall. "Do you know I have the same bookcase wall in my room? I've glanced at your titles. Many grace my bookshelf also. We both have a love of learning and books. We both are intelligent... more so than our friends and the majority of the wizarding population. When was the last time you had a really stimulating conversation?"

Hermione blushed. She examined her hands tentatively. "It was at dinner with you the other night."

"The time before that?"

She sighed. "Also with you."

"Do you have truly stimulating conversations with anyone else?"

"Occasionally Filius and I have a good go-round, and Minerva is quite entertaining."

"Who do you have stimulating conversations with on a steady basis?"

Hermione gave him a defeated look. "Only you, Severus," she answered softly. Squaring her shoulders, she went on. "But that doesn't mean that I can fall in love with you! And really, can you see yourself falling in love with me?"

"I couldn't until the night of the ball."

Hermione's shoulders sagged. "Severus, we can't base a relationship on a dream or hallucination that you had."

"Hermione, will you speak with Arista?"

Hermione looked down and thought. "It will prove to you that you have been seeing things, Severus."

"I would probably welcome that," he mused. Looking away from Hermione, he called into the air. "Arista?"

He waited a minute, but the fairy did not appear. "Arista?" he called again. Still nothing. Hermione arched an eyebrow at him. Severus began to fidget. "Very funny, fairy. Now come out and show yourself."

Still nothing.

"Severus," Hermione said quietly.

"If you'll excuse me, Professor Granger," Severus said gruffly as his cheeks turned scarlet. He rose and stalked out of her room before she had a chance to call him back.

He felt like running and hiding. He'd never been so embarrassed in his life. His pace quickened as he made his way down the stairs. The light around him shimmered, and Arista seemed to float beside him as he took the stairs at a breakneck speed.

"Visions... simply hallucinations," he mumbled to himself.

"Oh, Severus! You are so silly! You know I'm real."

He continued down the stairs at a break-neck pace. "Not real. Definitely not real," he muttered, not looking at the fairy next to him.

Arista huffed at him and tapped him on the head with her wand.

"Ow!" he cried as he rubbed his head. He stopped and glared at Arista. A normal person would have shied away, but she only tilted her head and gazed at him, a serene smile on her face.

"Does that feel like a hallucination to you?" Arista asked as she grinned at him.

Severus wheeled around at Arista. "If you're so real, why did you not appear when I called you?" he growled.

"She cannot see me yet."

"Why not?" Severus snapped.

"She's not ready. She doesn't believe."

"I don't believe, yet here you are tittering at my side!"

Arista laughed. Severus groaned. "You had a tiny, little bit of belief in you. She has none. She has to have that tiny, little bit or she will never see me."

"So, I am doomed for her to think me mental because she'll never believe? Why didn't you tell me that before?"

"Why, Severus, if I told you before, would you have told Hermione anything?"

"Of course not, you raving lunatic! That's the whole point."

Arista nodded her head as she smiled at him. "Exactly. She would never believe if you didn't tell her anything. Now she'll open her mind. As soon as the inkling of belief enters her head, I'll pop right over there."

"Oh, yes, please," Severus said with an effeminate flourish of his hand. "Just *pop* right on over there!"

Arista sighed. "Severus, my dear, you really need to learn patience." She shook her head at him impatiently.

"Patience?!" Severus snapped. "You make me look like a fool and then you expect me to patiently wait for Hermione to be able to talk to you? What if she never gets to that point?"

"Oh, have faith. She will get there. Just give her some time. She's a quick study."

Severus opened his mouth to respond, but Arista shimmered away. He looked crossly at the empty air where she had stood.

"She'd better get there quickly," he mumbled to himself before stalking down the rest of the stairs to the dungeons.

Hermione mulled over the strange visit by Severus. She'd never seen him in such a state. Had someone cast a spell upon him? He certainly seemed adamant that this mythical fairy existed and had had multiple conversations with him. The whole situation was incredibly odd. It definitely deserved her attention.

Getting up, she left her room and headed for the library. After a few minutes, she strode through the doors and nodded at Madam Pince.

"I need to use the Restricted Section, Irma."

The woman nodded to her and went back to the periodical she was reading. Hermione moved to the Restricted Section as she chuckled to herself. Irma Pince was a woman who took her job seriously. Even she didn't break her rule about silence in the library. What was even funnier was that Irma was a regular chatterbox outside of her workplace. Sometimes Hermione found it hard to get her to stop talking about a subject. However, when she was at work in the library, hardly a word ever escaped her tongue.

Hermione soon found herself in the stacks of the Restricted Section. She made her way down the aisle to the section pertaining to mythical creatures. Gazing at the titles,

she quickly found a book titled *Fabled Magical Creatures*. She pulled it from the shelf. It was a lovely book, complete with artists' renderings of what each creature was rumored to look like. Turning to the index, she found an entry for fairy-witches and quickly turned to it. Her eyes studied the picture of a rather normal looking witch dressed like a princess. The woman held a wand with a star at the end. Surrounding the star sat a pair of butterfly wings that flittered slightly in the magical picture. Looking back to the fairy, who was smiling at her now, Hermione noted that the only unique part of the woman's appearance was that her hair was platinum blonde and incredibly straight.

Hermione went on to read the description. It said much the same as Hermione's book, although this author felt that fairies truly existed. It seemed that the problem with proving their existence lay in the essence of that existence.

Generally, a fairy will only be visible to its intended charge. While it is rumored that a fairy can appear at will to anyone they wish, it is also well known that fairies are incredibly particular about whom they reveal themselves to. It would be highly unusual for a fairy to show him or herself to someone other than their charge.

Hermione mulled that over. Closing the book, she returned it to the shelf. Next to that book sat another. *Faerie Tales* was the title of this book. She flipped through it and found it a book of stories about fairies and their lives. It encompassed stories of traditional fairies and fairy-witches alike. She decided to take this book to her room to examine it in better detail. She tucked it under her arm and walked to the entrance of the library, waving to Irma as she left.

Chapter 4

Chapter 4 of 7

Severus comes face-to-face with his fairy godmother. Will he accept her offer to grant a wish? More importantly... will his wish come true?

Chapter 4

Hermione's eyes struggled to stay open. She had been reading *Faerie Tales* now for at least three hours. She was only half-way through the book, and she had skipped all the stories about common fairies. The tales about fairy-witches were interesting. All claimed to be first-hand accounts of people who had interacted with their personal fairies. Hermione wasn't sure she believed any of it. All of the encounters could be explained away by wishful thinking or hallucinations. She just wished she could find some real proof. She was beginning to fear for Severus' sanity. Perhaps the students had finally sent him over the edge.

She focused on the story before her. She'd not begun it, as the minute she turned the page, her eyes had drooped shut. Now, she snapped them open and willed herself to read.

From the time I was a child, I always knew I had a guardian angel. I had seen her once or twice. She never said a word, but had always smiled at me before disappearing. The first time I saw her, I was but a child. My family had gone on a picnic in a nearby forest, and I had wandered off. Before I knew it, I was lost. I tried to find my way home, but only managed to get myself farther away from my family. I found myself alone and crying in the woods.

Suddenly, I felt a hand on my shoulder. I looked around but saw no one. Nonetheless, I felt the hand again urge me along. It stayed on my back even though I saw nothing around me. Before long, I could hear my family shouting my name. I called to them and immediately felt the hand remove itself from my back. I turned suddenly and saw a beautiful blonde woman smiling at me. She remained for a few seconds and winked at me before disappearing. My family found me only a few seconds later.

Similar occurrences happened throughout my childhood, with my guardian angel looking out for me when I was lost, unhappy, or worried about something. As I grew older, the occurrences happened less and less until they seemed to disappear completely. Then, when I was a young adult, I was in the throes of a painful breakup with a cheating boyfriend. I was crushed, and wished that I could find someone who would appreciate me and be faithful.

Suddenly, my room was filled with light, and the long-forgotten angel appeared before me. She explained that she was a fairy godmother and that she was there to grant me my wish. I was skeptical at first, but was surprised to meet a nice man the very next day. We grew close and before I knew it, we had married. I thank my fairy godmother for a wonderful life.

Hermione scoffed at the end of that tale. It was probably just coincidence that this particular person found a new love so quickly. The story mirrored Severus' somewhat, and that was interesting. Of course, the woman in the story had been distraught with her life as it was, just like Severus. Surely, her wishful thinking had influenced her ideas about the fairy.

She mulled over the story a bit more, but her mind became foggy, and she soon fell asleep.

Hermione was a little girl again. She was in school, barely nine years old. The school bell rang, and she got up and left the classroom. Three boys followed her out. Once they were away from the school grounds, they began to taunt her.

"Buck-toothed swot!" one cried.

"If it's not in a book, she doesn't know anything about it!" another teased.

"Well, if I were that ugly, I'd spend all day with my nose in a book too!" the third chimed in.

The three boys laughed and pointed at her.

"Look at her! She looks like a deranged rabbit!"

Hermione walked faster, trying to keep the tears from falling down her cheeks. Luckily, she only lived a few blocks from her school. The boys continued to follow her, calling her terrible things. By the time she reached her home, the tears were falling quickly. She entered her home and raced up the stairs without even greeting her mother. Throwing herself on the bed, she sobbed loudly.

A gentle hand touched her shoulder. Hermione turned and saw a beautiful woman with straight blonde hair smiling down at her.

"It's all right," the woman said. "Those boys will grow up to do menial things, while you will have a glorious adulthood, doing something that you enjoy immensely."

"Who are you?" Hermione asked.

"I'm your fairy godmother, dear." She waved a long stick over Hermione, and she immediately felt better. "Don't let those nasty boys get you down. You are a lovely girl and will grow to be lovelier still."

Hermione was dumbfounded. She had no idea what to say to this apparition in her bedroom.

"Now," the fairy continued. "You are too old to remember that I've had a visit with you. Remember to keep your chin up. You will remember this incident only if you need to." With that, the fairy waved her stick again.

Hermione blinked and looked around. She'd thought she'd heard something, but her room was empty. Her eyebrows knit together, but she could not solve the question that floated in her mind. She shrugged it off. Whatever had happened, it had brought her out of her melancholy. She felt much better now. She would not let those boys bother her with their teasing again.

Hermione's eyes opened slowly, and she stared into the blackness of her room. The dream was still fresh in her mind. She sat up and lit the room with a flick of her wand. An odd feeling enveloped her. She actually had lived that dream except for the entrance of the fairy godmother. She remembered being confused by a sound she'd heard, but had found nothing.

Chuckling to herself, she rolled her eyes. Her mind was playing tricks on her, inserting a mythical creature into a memory!

Hermione sat at the table in the Burrow surrounded by chattering. There was a flurry of excitement as a group of women sat around Molly's kitchen table. Plans for Harry and Ginny's wedding had been made, and tonight, the women were all amassed to have a pre-wedding party. Each one was sharing stories about Ginny and Harry. Molly started.

"I remember when we first met Harry at the train station. You didn't stop talking about him for days, dear! You were merely a child, but even then you knew what you wanted!" Molly squeezed Ginny's shoulder as she gave her a loving look. Ginny grinned back at her.

"Yes, you always knew, Ginny," Fleur cried. "I remember you hideeing at doors and leestening een on Harry, Ron, and Hermione when they were plotting against You-Know-Who. You were so cute wiz your ear up against the door. You thought Harry and Hermione were up to no good, *n'est-ce pas*?"

Ginny giggled. "No, not really. I just wanted to be included, but they wouldn't let me in. I knew Hermione had a crush on Ron."

Luna looked at Ginny dreamily. "It's just so romantic, Ginny. You've been in love with him since you were a little girl, and now you're getting married!"

Molly yawned loudly. "Oh, my! It's late, and we've been celebrating for hours. You'd best get to bed, dear. You have a big day tomorrow, and we don't want you looking fallow."

"Yes, Mum," Ginny said as she watched Molly head for her bedroom. Fleur excused herself also and disappeared, leaving Luna, Ginny, and Hermione still seated at the table.

Hermione shook her head in admiration. "Really, Ginny, I don't know how you hung on for so long."

"Well, Hermione, you always urged me to be patient."

Hermione laughed. "I also told you to date other men!"

Ginny smiled. "Yes, but that was only a means to an end." Ginny leaned into her two friends. "Actually, I had outside assurances that everything would work out as I wanted."

Hermione arched an eyebrow at her, but Luna nodded in understanding.

"Your fairy-witch paid you a visit, didn't she?" Luna asked seriously.

Ginny turned to Luna with an incredulous look. "How on earth would you know that, Luna?"

Luna smiled at her slowly. "It just makes sense. It's the kind of thing a fairy-witch would do."

Hermione shook her head, dumbfounded that the subject of fairy-witches had been brought up. "What do you know about fairy-witches?" she asked Luna.

Luna laughed. "Why, they're marvelous, Hermione. They watch over us and console us when we're sad."

"But... nobody's ever seen one."

"I have," Ginny said matter-of-factly.

Hermione's head snapped over to Ginny. "What are you talking about?"

"Do you remember when I wrote that Valentine to Harry? Merlin, it was so cheesy!" She quoted it aloud with a flourish of her hand as she recited it.

His eyes are as green as a fresh pickled toad,

His hair is as dark as a blackboard.

I wish he was mine, he's really divine,

The hero who conquered the Dark Lord.

Laughing and shaking her head, she continued her story. "When I wrote it, I read it aloud. All of a sudden, there she was... my fairy godmother."

"Mine has beautiful blue eyes!" Luna interjected.

"You've seen one too?" Hermione asked.

Luna nodded. "She reminds me of my mother. Do you suppose she could be my mother watching over me?"

Hermione blanched. "They're rumored to be a cross between humans and fairies. I doubt she would be your mother. In fact, I doubt that she even exists. You were probably dreaming."

"Oh, no, Hermione. I wasn't." Luna shook her head solemnly. Her eyes were wide with sincerity.

"Neither was I," Ginny said.

Hermione huffed and blew a strip of hair away from her face. "How can you believe such things? They're obviously manifestations of a clouded mind."

Ginny frowned. "All I know is that I said that wish out loud, and she appeared."

"Was your fairy blonde too?" Luna asked. "They're always blonde."

"Luna, how do you know so much about these mythical creatures?" Hermione asked.

"Oh, my father did a study on them. His fairy let him travel with her. It was his wish, and she didn't deny him."

"You're father followed a fairy-witch around?" Hermione sincerely doubted that the man who thought the horn in his home was a Snorkack horn instead of an Erumpet horn would have recognized a fairy-witch if it came up and hit him over the head with a wand.

"He spent an entire day with his fairy, watching the actions of others as she helped them. He even saw her home, although she wouldn't let him see any other fairy-witches. It was very interesting."

"Right..."

"Hermione, I don't know about Luna's father, but I know I've seen my fairy. She assured me that things would work out with Harry. She told me I'd just need to be patient. Sometimes I wasn't as patient as I should have been, but things did work out in the end."

Hermione shook her head. "I just can't believe this. Why, all of a sudden, is everyone talking about fairy godmothers?"

"Who else is talking about them?" Ginny asked curiously.

Hermione waved her hand in dismissal. "Never mind. I need to go. Your mum is right, it's getting late. I'll see you in the morning."

Hermione stormed out of the Burrow, leaving a confused Luna and Ginny staring after her.

"She needs a bit more convincing," Luna mused as she watched her friend depart. Ginny only nodded.

Chapter 5

Chapter 5 of 7

Is Hermione seeing things?

Chapter 5

Hermione stormed into her room and dumped her purse on a nearby chair. Her wand was placed carefully on the table before she set about tearing her clothes from her body. As she changed into some pajamas, she thought over the conversation she'd just had with Ginny and Luna. She could understand Luna believing in such hypothetical creatures as fairy-witches, but Ginny? Ginny had always been levelheaded. That was one of the things Hermione liked about her. But this fairy godmother nonsense... where had that come from?

She frowned. Why was she having all these experiences about fairy-witches now? Between Severus and his outlandish story, her research and ensuing dream, and Luna and Ginny going off on the existence of fairy godmothers, the last couple of days had been filled with nothing but fairy-witch lore. *Could it be possible?*

Her dream came back to her again. *That was just a dream. I had been reading too long, the stories got absorbed in my brain.* In the dream, the fairy had said that she would remember the incident if needed. *What if it was real? What if she used some sort of memory charm so I wouldn't remember it unless I needed to?*

From her experiences in the magical world, she knew that it was possible to manipulate memory. She'd done it herself. Could it be possible that she actually had seen a fairy, but her memory of it had been wiped clean? If that was the case, then Severus very well might be telling the truth, and she needed to remember that incident to move forward.

Hermione's gaze was drawn to the side of her bed where some sparkling lights had appeared. They gathered together into a ball of light, which then turned into a person. Hermione pointed her wand at the intruder. The woman before her giggled as she extended her hand and easily pulled the wand from Hermione's hand. Hermione gaped at her.

"Hermione, I thought you'd never be able to see me!" the blonde woman exclaimed.

"Who... who are you?"

"I think you know the answer to that, my dear."

"You're Severus' fairy-witch," Hermione stated. This woman looked different from the fairy in her dream. They both had straight, blonde hair, but this fairy's coloring was a bit paler, her cheekbones set a bit higher, and her eyes were a vivid blue as opposed to the hazel eyes of the fairy who had appeared in her dream.

The fairy giggled and sat down on the bed. "I am! Severus wants me to assure you that he's not crazy."

Hermione reached out and touched the fairy. She felt solid and real enough.

"Maybe I've fallen asleep again?" she muttered to herself.

"Oh, Hermione, this is no dream! I am here because Severus wished me to be."

"Why didn't you show yourself when he was here then?"

"My dear, you have to believe before you can see me."

"But I don't believe," Hermione told her.

"You only need to have a tiny inkling of belief. You attained that just a few minutes ago as you thought about your friends and your dream. It seems my colleague Zora foresaw the need for you to remember the incident you dreamed about eventually."

"The fairy's name is Zora?"

Arista nodded her head.

"And you are Arista?" Hermione continued.

"Yes!" Arista cried as she clasped her hands together in joy.

"And you're real."

Arista threw her head back and laughed. "Of course I'm real! Good heavens, Hermione, haven't you seen enough oddities in the magical world to believe that I can exist?"

Hermione thought of the Hallows and her intense objections that they could be real. She blushed. "Actually, I find it hard to believe in something when I can't see it or research it."

"Well, you can see me, can't you?" Arista asked cheerfully.

"I can," Hermione answered.

"So, there's your proof!"

Hermione sighed. *It really is hard to deny what's sitting right in front of me.* She reached out and touched Arista again.

"You seem real enough," she muttered.

"Good. Now, on to business." Arista rose and spun around before facing Hermione. Hermione could not control the amused look that came over her face at the flightiness she saw in this fairy.

"Now, as Severus explained," Arista began, "he made a wish."

Hermione nodded.

"He did not know you would be the fulfillment of that wish."

Hermione shook her head in disbelief.

"What is it, dear?" Arista asked.

"How can that be?" She watched as Arista regarded her curiously. "How can I fall in love with Severus Snape? An even bigger question is: how could he fall in love with me?"

"Dear, you are both perfect for each other."

"No we're not! There is a huge age gap between us, he is surly at best, and we have nothing in common."

Arista sat on the bed and took Hermione's hand in hers. "So, you are trying to tell me that you don't find him attractive?"

Hermione mulled that over. "Well, no... I think he's quite striking." Her eyes shot to Arista's. "But just because I find him attractive doesn't mean that anything could ever come of that!"

"He finds you attractive."

"Now you're just making up lies!" Hermione cried.

Arista shook her head. "I know him and his likes. I'm his fairy; of course I would know these things. Besides, if you get to know one another, you will find that you have much in common, and the age difference won't matter."

Hermione looked down and shook her head. "I don't know. This all seems so ethereal."

"Zora, I think we could use some assistance," Arista called into the air.

Another ball of light formed, this time with another fairy emerging. It was the fairy from Hermione's dream. The fairy bent low and hugged Hermione.

"My dear, it feels like it's been forever since I have been able to touch you! It's wonderful to be able to interact with you, even if it's only for a little while."

Hermione patted Zora on the back awkwardly. The fairy pulled away but kept her hands on Hermione's shoulders.

"I assure you that Arista has spoken the truth. Once a wish is granted, it comes to pass. You will find a great love with Severus Snape."

Hermione shook her head. "How? Aren't you forcing us to love one another? What if we really don't belong together, but you're manipulating us so that we think that we do?"

Zora chuckled in a high-pitched voice. "That's not how wishes work, dear. They come from things that already exist. You two wouldn't be able to fall in love if there wasn't some hidden attraction between the two of you. The wish is made from things and circumstances that already exist, even if the people involved don't realize it."

Hermione thought on that for a minute. "So, you're saying that we would have fallen in love eventually?"

Zora smiled and caressed Hermione's cheek. "You've always been a quick one, my dear. Yes, it's entirely possible that you would have fallen in love all on your own. It's also possible, however, that neither of you would have recognized true love when it stared you in the face. The wish Severus made will ensure that you both will recognize the signs and that you will act positively about them, ensuring that the wish comes true."

"What exactly did he wish for again?" Hermione asked curiously.

Arista smiled at her. "He wished to have someone love him as he is. He wished for someone who would respect him, and in turn, someone he would respect."

Hermione looked into Zora's eyes. "I would also like to find that in a mate."

Zora's eyes lit up. "Are you making a wish?"

"Do I need to? Isn't everything going to fall into place?"

Zora nodded. "It should. There's nothing wrong with you making your own wish, though." Zora squealed. "I would love to grant it!"

Hermione smiled. She liked her fairy godmother. "It wouldn't mess up Severus' wish, would it?"

Arista shook her head. "It can only bind it stronger, dear."

"You're sure this doesn't take away our free will?"

"No, dear. You will only be following the logical progression of your friendship."

Hermione looked back at Zora. "All right. I'll make a wish as well. How do I do it?"

Zora giggled. "You simply tell me what you want."

"Is that what I really want?" Hermione whispered to herself.

"You want to find happiness with someone, don't you?" Zora asked.

"Yes, Zora. I do."

"Then does it matter that that person is Severus Snape, if he becomes all you wish for?"

Excitement coursed through Hermione at the thought of having someone who cared for her in that way. She pictured it being Severus. Her heart leapt into her throat. No, it didn't matter at all! She already found him attractive, and if he could treat her well and love her without reservations, she would be the happiest woman in the world. Determination filled her face.

"You're right, Zora. I would definitely welcome such affection from Severus. He's an honorable man."

"Then make your wish, dear," the fairy admonished.

"I wish..." Hermione hesitated. If she made this wish, she was committing herself to love Severus Snape and be with him forever. Suddenly, that thought excited her to no end. She smiled. "I wish that my relationship with Severus will be filled with love and respect for one another. I wish that he will become my soul mate."

Arista smiled as Zora twirled her wand over Hermione's head. "Done!" she proclaimed.

The two fairies rose from the bed. Arista looked down at Hermione. "Now, just because this wish and Severus' have been granted doesn't mean that you will be immediately and madly in love. You must learn about each other. With knowledge and understanding comes love."

Hermione nodded her head vigorously. "Will either of us see you again?"

"You never know!" Zora answered, her smile wide.

Before Hermione could say anything more, the two women had disappeared. Hermione shook her head. That had been the oddest encounter she had ever experienced. But the possible outcome made her heart flutter. She needed to talk to Severus.

Chapter 6

Chapter 6 of 7

Severus comes face-to-face with his fairy godmother. Will he accept her offer to grant a wish? More importantly... will his wish come true?

Chapter 6

Severus frowned at his door. Someone was outside knocking. He was in no mood for company. The only thing he was in the mood for was utter darkness. He'd risen early, unable to sleep. He worried that Hermione would think he'd gone over the edge forever. In his heart, he knew she would never come to the conclusion that fairies might exist. She would think him a desperate fool.

He hadn't bothered to open his curtains, nor had he bothered to light any candles. His enchanted windows stayed covered, and he sat silently in the darkness. This was where he belonged, after all. There would be no happy ending for him.

The knock at the door came a little stronger now. He glared at it. Grunting, he rose finally, knowing he needed to answer it. For all he knew, some dunderheaded student had hexed his fingers off and was in dire need of medical attention.

"What is it?" he growled as he threw open the door.

He saw Hermione standing there, looking him up and down with a surprised look on her face. He glanced down at his attire. He wore a black T-shirt and black boxers. His face reddened as he realized he hadn't bothered to get dressed yet. He looked to Hermione sheepishly.

"May I come in?" Hermione asked tentatively.

"Please do," he said as he stepped aside to let her pass. "Let me just put on something more appropriate."

Severus disappeared into his bedroom, leaving Hermione to herself. When he came back a few minutes later, dressed in a dark-green shirt and black trousers, he found

Hermione examining his bookcase. She turned when she saw him enter.

"I didn't think you owned anything but black and white, Severus!" she teased.

Severus smirked. "I prefer to be a bit less austere in the privacy of my own home," he explained.

Hermione nodded. She eyed him again. "Well, that color suits you," she mused. "I had an interesting encounter early this morning."

Severus arched an eyebrow at her. "Indeed?"

Hermione chuckled. "It seems that your fairy godmother was eager to pay me a visit."

Severus' eyes grew wide. "You saw her?"

Hermione nodded.

"Then you don't think I've lost it?"

Hermione laughed and looked to the floor, shaking her head. "No, Severus. I don't think I ever really thought you'd truly lost it. I just assumed you'd been staying up too late or something." She looked back up at him shyly. "Do you think this can work?"

"Arista seemed to think that it will."

"Now that they're gone, I wonder if it was all a dream."

"They?" Severus asked.

Hermione smiled. "My fairy godmother appeared too. She seemed quite excited about the prospect of us being together."

"What did she say?"

"They both said basically the same thing. We're evidently meant for each other. Your wish just brought that to the forefront of our minds and will make it more obvious."

Severus frowned. "I'm sorry."

"Why?" Hermione asked with concern.

"You should not be saddled with the likes of me for a companion."

"I could think of worse fates, Severus."

"Name one."

Hermione laughed. "Being saddled with Ron Weasley for the rest of my life."

"At least he's your age."

"Yes, but he acts like he's twelve."

Severus smirked. "Thank you for considering this, Hermione. What do we do now?"

"I suspect we should get to know one another better, Severus. How can we fall in love when we know so little of each other?"

"Would you like to stay for breakfast?" Severus asked tentatively.

Hermione smiled at him. "That would be nice."

Severus had summoned a house-elf, and now the couple was seated across from each other at his table, sharing breakfast. Severus marveled at the strange turn of events. Here he was with a lovely woman who wanted to get to know him better. Even this simple scenario had not been something he would have ever thought possible.

"Severus, why did you decide to return to teaching?" Hermione asked before she bit into her toast with jam.

Severus leaned back in his chair and thought about it. "I debated disappearing off the face of the earth for a while, but I've spent most of my life hiding in one way or another. I was tired of constantly being secretive, so that wasn't an option for me.

"If I were to be totally honest, I would prefer simply freelancing potions. I mulled over doing that, but realistically, it is a hard field to become established in. My past would make my name difficult to sell. The reality was that it would take a long time for me to be able to make a living by simply freelancing. I spoke with Albus, and he agreed to give me the time I'd need to brew what I wanted. Although teaching is not my favorite thing to do, it pays the bills."

"Are you happy?"

"For the most part, yes. The dunderheads we teach annoy me to no end, but I do enjoy sharing my knowledge of potions. Occasionally a student comes along who grasps the finer points of the subject." Severus nodded to Hermione in acknowledgement.

"I thought you hated me as a student," Hermione mused.

He arched an eyebrow at her. "Do you know why I disliked you? You were just like me, but you had acceptance. I too was a know-it-all, but where did it get me? I was ostracized for my knowledge. I learned to keep my mouth shut and do my work silently. You, on the other hand, had friends and respect."

Hermione giggled. "You really think I had respect, Severus?" She then grimaced. "In my first year, I truly struggled until Ron and Harry became my friends. No one wanted to talk to the girl who knew *everything*. Later on, those in my house were friendly toward me, and I got a couple more close friends like Ginny, Luna, and Neville, but for the most part, I was too smart to be a friend to many. People somehow find intelligence a barrier they don't want to cross when acquiring friends."

Hermione gazed thoughtfully at Severus. "No, Severus, I don't even think I had much respect except from my friends. Even if I did, I was probably a bit too insecure to recognize it."

Severus huffed. "Insecurity was never something you needed to worry about, Granger."

Hermione laughed wryly. "On the contrary, for the first five years at Hogwarts, I was paranoid of failure. I felt I needed to prove myself worthy at every turn, or I would never be accepted in the Wizarding world. As I gained more confidence in my abilities, that slowly went away. Still, I sometimes feel inadequate, but I try to remember my accomplishments when that feeling overcomes me."

Severus raised an eyebrow. "You sometimes feel inadequate?"

Hermione nodded.

"I assure you, Hermione," Severus said in a softer tone. "There is never a need for you to feel inadequate at anything. You excel at everything you set your mind to."

Hermione regarded Severus thoughtfully. "Thank you," she responded. "You don't know what it means to hear someone like you say that to me."

"Someone like me?" he queried.

Hermione nodded. "Severus, I've always had the highest respect for you. You're brilliant, and you have exacting standards. For the longest time I felt it was impossible to please you in anything."

"I find that people in general are too easily pleased by mediocrity. They gush over the most mundane of achievements. To me, one must truly strive for greatness in their field. There are too few people who want to put that much effort into anything, even when they enjoy a subject."

Hermione nodded and moved her eggs around on her plate. "You're right, Severus. I've encountered that while teaching here. Students are only willing to give the bare minimum to get by. There are exceptions, of course, but I think that in general, they just want to get through their assignments. Learning everything they can about the subject is not on their agenda."

Severus nodded, and they were silent for a while. He eyed the woman before him. She certainly could hold her own in a conversation. That was a plus. She was also quite pretty. Her hair had calmed down considerably since her childhood. This, of course, was something he'd noticed right away when she'd returned to Hogwarts, but he hadn't thought much about it. Now, he gazed at her. She really was lovely. Could she ever come to the conclusion that he was worthy of her time? She was trying now, but how long would that last? Even if she did, would it be enough? Could they find happiness and love with one another? He was surprised to feel a deep desire for that to happen between them.

The meal continued on and the two professors found quite a bit to say to one another. At long last, Hermione pushed back from the table and stood.

"I must be going, Severus. I need to get to the Weasleys' and help Ginny prepare for her wedding."

"Ah, yes, the nuptials of Harry Potter," Severus said tartly. "Do have a good time."

Hermione smiled, ignoring Severus' sarcasm. "I'm sure I will. Would you like me to send my... condolences... to the bride?"

Severus smirked. "I believe that would be appropriate."

Hermione grinned at him. After a minute, she began to make her way around the table.

Now what? Severus thought in a panic. *What do I do? We had a nice morning, but how do we progress?* Severus stared at Hermione with a look of fear in his eyes. Hermione looked at him curiously. He cleared his throat.

"Maybe... maybe we should... I don't know..." He gazed down into his lap. "Maybe we should go on an official date... soon."

He peeked up through his hair, which had conveniently fallen into his face, shielding it from any reproving glare Hermione might choose to throw at him. Instead of a glare, he saw her smile broadly.

"That would be wonderful, Severus. Let me know where and when."

With that, she moved away from the table and out the door. He stared after her for a few minutes, amazed at how well things had gone. She had agreed to go on a date with him.

Oh, Merlin... a date? How do I go about having a date with her?

Fear filled him again.

"Arista! I need you!"

He was relieved to see the ball of light forming within a few seconds of his terse request. He was even more relieved when he heard her laughing voice.

"What is it you need?" Arista asked with a grin.

"I am at a loss as to what to do now," Severus admitted.

"Silly, just be yourself!"

"I am not silly!"

"Oh, yes you are. Can't you see she wants this as much as you do?"

Severus' eyebrows knit together. "How can you tell?"

"Didn't you see the smile she gave you when you asked her about a date?"

Severus nodded.

"That... silly... is how I could tell."

"Arista, I have no idea how to proceed in this."

Arista's wand came up to her chin and she tapped it while thinking.

"Well, what does Hermione like?"

It was Severus' turn to tap his chin. "I heard her talking to Potter about catching up on the opera now that her schedule has calmed down a bit."

"There you go, Severus."

"Hmm, I was talking to Lucius last week and he said that the Vienna Staatsoper was performing..." His eyes grew wide as he looked up to Arista. "Tomorrow night!"

Arista clapped happily and laughed. "Oh! That would be a wonderful first date, Severus!"

He looked at her hopefully. "Do you really think so?"

She nodded her head. "Oh, yes! What are they playing?"

"La Boheme."

Arista sighed. "Perfect!"

"What do I do with her there?"

Laughing, Arista shook her head at him. "Go watch the opera, silly. Talk about it during the intermission and afterward. You've got immediate conversation built right into the date!"

Severus regarded her skeptically. "You're sure a night at the opera would be a good date?"

Arista nodded her head. "It's simply perfect."

"Good. And don't call me silly."

Arista began to disappear. She smiled broadly at him. "I'll stop calling you silly when you stop acting that way," she said in a giggle as she disappeared.

Severus scowled. The fairy had better be right about this date or he'd show her just how "silly" he could be.

Chapter 7

Chapter 7 of 7

Will all end happily ever after?

Chapter 7

Hermione sat on her sofa, deep in thought about her relationship with Severus Snape. They had been dating now for four months, and she was quite happy. But something was niggling at her consciousness. Something that just wasn't quite right.

Their first official date had been completely wonderful. Severus had whisked her to Vienna for a night at the opera. She had cried for Mimi in La Boheme and had been sure Severus would mock her, but he had only commiserated at the sad circumstances when they had discussed the performance after the show. The entire night had been romantic and wonderful, and she still thought back on it fondly.

Severus and Hermione had moved slowly in their relationship after that. They had engaged in deep conversations at dinner, which oftentimes had led to them ending up in one or the other's rooms, dragging on late into the night.

Severus had whisked Hermione away to Hogsmeade every weekend, where they would shop, dine, and spend time with one another.

To be truthful, they had spent almost all of their spare time together. They seemed to get along famously, except for one aspect. They had not yet kissed.

Hermione mulled this over in her head. *I'm certainly not going to kiss him! I may be a modern-thinking woman, but there are just some things on which I won't compromise.* She stared out her window as she sat in her favorite chair with a book perched in her lap. She'd given up correcting essays for the day as the obvious lack of effort on the student's part was making her head hurt.

Maybe he's not interested. Maybe now that he knows me, he doesn't want to have a serious relationship with me. Maybe he doubts what that fairy godmother said altogether.

Hermione huffed and rose from her seat, placing her book on the table next to her. There had been a few times when she'd sworn he was going to kiss her. Unfortunately, those episodes had always ended in disappointment for her.

Severus and Hermione walked hand in hand down the street. They had Floo'd to London and were now having a romantic evening walk after dining at the latest high-class WIZARDING restaurant. Hermione stopped suddenly and drew Severus' attention to the river that flowed beside the street they were walking on.

"Severus, look how the moon shines on the river!"

Severus looked out at the river and slipped his arm around Hermione's shoulder. Hermione felt her insides tense up at his nearness. This was such a romantic setting. The one thing that would make it perfect would be his kiss on her lips. She turned her head toward him and found him staring at her intensely.

"It is quite lovely," he drawled. His head drew nearer to hers and excitement filled her.

Closer... closer... he was almost there now! Hermione looked into Severus' eyes and the intense look on his face turned to one that seemed as if he were being hunted. Instead of kissing her, he pulled her into a hug and patted her on the back.

When he spoke, his voice was a bit more high-pitched than usual. "I'm glad to be here with you."

He withdrew and took her hand, but he was somewhat distant the rest of the night. Hermione wondered what she'd done to spoil the mood.

Hermione came back to herself and furrowed her brow. It seemed that any time she thought Severus was about to kiss her, something else would happen. He'd hug her awkwardly, he'd avert his eyes, he'd draw her attention elsewhere. She shook her head. Maybe she was just reading him incorrectly. He must not have been intending to kiss her at all.

Despite the lack of affection in their relationship, Hermione had found herself growing incredibly enamored with Severus Snape. Despite his prickly persona, she had found that when they were alone, he let his curtness fall away. Of course, when he was angry, he was formidable.

Severus stormed into the Great Hall and threw himself into his seat next to Hermione. He began slamming mashed potatoes onto his plate and grumbling to himself.

"What's wrong?" she asked.

Severus' head snapped to hers. "If I wanted to discuss it, I would have spoken about it!"

Hermione frowned. "Listen, if you're angry about something, don't yell at me about it."

Severus moved his prominent nose to within inches of her own.

"If you would mind your own business, I wouldn't need to yell!"

Hermione narrowed her eyes at Severus. "I simply asked what was wrong. If you are so immature as to get offended because I asked a concerned question, then perhaps you should take your dinner in your room!"

"I will! Thank you!" He got up and stormed out of the Hall.

Hermione shook her head at the memory. She smiled too. After his little display he'd presented her with a bouquet of white tulips. He'd said something about them representing forgiveness, and that he'd hoped that she could forgive him for his rudeness.

She'd forgiven him in an instant. Just the fact that he'd actually apologized had astounded her. It had proven to her that he was trying.

Unfortunately, being able to apologize didn't make a relationship. Neither did spending all their time together. It had been almost four months now, and he'd yet to show much affection for her. He'd embraced her only a couple of times, he occasionally held her hand, and he hadn't even seemed interested in kissing her. Her heart sank.

It's not working. He doesn't want me, I'm sure of it. Maybe it's time to give up on this. He must not know how to break it off. After the fairy's assurances, he probably doesn't want to let me down. We do have our choice, though. The fairies said that the wish would be fulfilled, but no one would be pushed into something they didn't want.

She shook her head. She couldn't see how the wish could be fulfilled if he had no interest in her. A sudden sadness enveloped her. In those short months, she'd grown fond of Severus. She found him attractive, and her stomach fluttered whenever she first saw him.

Her mind went back to the fairies. They had assured her that things would work out. She hoped they would, because as time went on, she found herself wanting to spend more and more time with Severus. As it was now, she couldn't imagine her life without him. She examined the feelings within her. Her heart longed to be with him forever. She'd finally found the one person who could match her in every way. Her shoulders sagged.

I think I love him. What else could that feeling be? I love him, but he just wants to be friends. Now what do I do?

Severus fidgeted on his couch. He stared into the fire. He always found it easier to think when he stared into the crackling flames. He had much to think about.

It's been four months. Hermione and I have spent a lot of time together. I feel comfortable with her, and she seems comfortable with me. Why haven't I kissed her yet?

He hadn't a decisive answer. He'd tried, oh, how he'd tried. It seemed that every time he was about to plant one on her alluring lips, something derailed the kiss. Mostly, he'd chickened out.

A spy to the Order, right hand man to Voldemort, and I can't even summon up enough courage to kiss a woman. What a disgrace I am! Psyching myself up, then just getting the jitters and avoiding her mouth all together. She must think me impassionate.

The one thing that kept coming to his mind whenever he thought of his relationship with Hermione was that he wanted to take things slowly. He wanted to do it right. The promises he'd gotten from Arista were too wonderful to muck up, and he had a way of mucking things up with women. Take the way Lily and he had ended up, for instance. She was the first of several failed relationships.

Narcissa Malfoy...she'd been a rebound from Lily. A foolish endeavor, especially since she was involved with Lucius at the time. Of course, she'd chosen Lucius over him. He'd been so bent on power that he hadn't seen what was right in front of him.

Bellatrix Black...another stupid relationship. Another grasp at power. He'd thought an association with Bellatrix would gain him favor with the Dark Lord. Evidently, he had a thing for sisters as well. Bellatrix complained that all he wanted was her body. She'd been right. She'd left him one night when he'd tried to slip his hand under her skirt once too often. She'd married Rodolphus Lestranger several months later.

Rita Skeeter...she had been all for good press. The affair had occurred after the first fall of the Dark Lord when he had been fighting to escape Azkaban. He'd needed an ally other than Dumbledore. The blonde witch had been eager to serve. Again, the relationship had gone nowhere fast. They hadn't lasted two weeks. She'd stormed out one evening, declaring she would not subject herself to his ugly mug for a minute more. He'd been at a loss as to her outburst. Perhaps it was the fact that he'd told her she was a gold-digging harpy, only out for a good story, willing to shag whomever she could for that story. If he remembered correctly, she countered that it would be a cold day in hell before she ever thought about shagging him.

Yes, his relationship experience prior to Hermione had been an exercise in failure. No wonder he didn't know what to do with the witch in his life. Oh, he knew what he'd like to do, but he was at a loss as to what actions were too much.

The one time I did get my nerve up, that Weasley brat barged in!

Severus got lost in the memory of the last time he'd tried to be affectionate with Hermione.

Hermione and Severus entered her room and she spun around with a wide grin on her face.

"Thank you for a wonderful evening!"

Severus rolled his eyes, but smiled a bit.

"It was your idea," he offered.

"Yes, but I never thought you would go!"

Severus narrowed his eyebrows in puzzlement. "I was raised by a Muggle father. I've been to many Muggle movies."

Hermione grasped his arm. "I know, but this movie is considered a 'chick-flick.' I didn't think you'd enjoy the mushy love story."

"It wasn't all that bad. At least the moron got his girl," Severus countered.

Her hand seemed to burn on his arm. Here was the chance he'd wanted to come for weeks. His chance to kiss the woman he'd grown so fond of.

"I did notice something they did that I would like to try between the two of us," he muttered and came closer to Hermione.

Hermione moved even closer to him and looked at him innocently. "What was that?"

Electricity flew through the air as he began to lower his head to hers. She even closed her eyes in anticipation, which sent a shiver through Severus even before he could place his lips on hers. Just as he was about to reach home a loud bang and a shouted expletive accosted them. The couple jumped apart to see Ron Weasley standing in the doorway gasping for breath.

"Oi, Hermione, I raced all the way up here! Ginny's morning sickness is unbearable. She needs you!"

Severus scowled at the red-headed interloper.

"You couldn't have waited half a minute?" he snapped. "Have you never heard of a Floo?"

Weasley looked to Severus with huge eyes. "Did I interrupt something?" he asked incredulously, as if the thought of Severus and Hermione enjoying their privacy was the most ludicrous thing he'd ever heard.

"No, Weasley," Severus sighed. "Nothing that we can't continue later." His eyes searched out Hermione's. She was frowning, but she gave him a quick nod. Within a matter of seconds she'd rushed through the door and away with the Weasley brat.

He sighed at the memory. After that, he'd lost his nerve again. The kiss never came. He wished he could be seductive... like Lucius Malfoy. Now there was a man who had every woman he encountered wrapped around his finger.

Uh oh!

There was a ball of light forming in front of him. Sure enough, Arista appeared, this time in a bright yellow gown. Severus stared incomprehensibly at her as she giggled, even before taking her full shape.

"You aren't serious, are you?" Severus asked. "That wasn't a real wish! I really don't want to be like Malfoy!"

Arista smiled brightly, her teeth sparkling. "My dear, Severus, you have it in you."

"Have... what... in me?"

"The ability to be seductive, of course! You must hurry and use it. Hermione is getting worried."

"Worried about what?" Severus scowled.

"Why, about whether you really want her or not. She's a bit tired of the buddy thing you two have going. She's ready for a man in her life."

"I am a man in her life," Severus retorted.

"Then show her that you are. At least kiss her! How does she know you love her if you don't kiss her?"

"Who said I love her?" Severus snapped. He looked very uncomfortable.

Arista pointed her wand at his heart. "You need to look in there, Severus. You will see."

A small light left her wand and entered his body over his heart. Severus grasped his chest.

"Are you trying to kill me, woman?"

Arista giggled again. "Just listen, Severus." She began fading from view. "You will know what to do."

Severus frowned. "Insufferable bint! Could you be any more vague?"

Then it happened. His heart nearly exploded in his chest.

Oh, hell, she's given me a heart attack!

He felt his heart constrict within him as thoughts of Hermione flooded his mind. He saw her looking up shyly at him and smiling, and he felt as if his heart would tear in two. His hand grasped his chest even harder as he doubled over. He saw her waving at him and walking away. He yearned to follow her. She looked back sadly and blew him a kiss. Instinctively, he knew she was saying goodbye. His heart constricted painfully. How could he live without her? He'd become too accustomed to her being there. She had become a part of him. Amazement filled him.

I love her. I can't imagine being without her. She truly is my soul mate.

He marveled at his discovery. The one thing he thought he'd never find...true love...was within his grasp. It was so close he could feel it, but if he didn't act, he'd lose it all. Standing abruptly, he rushed for the door.

I need to tell her, before it's too late!

Pounding on the door, Severus called Hermione's name. He continued to pound until she was facing him with a frown on her face.

"Merlin, Severus, what's going on?"

He flew past her and turned back to face her, his hair swinging into his face. "I'm glad I found you at home."

Hermione gave him a puzzled look as she closed the door behind her. "Whatever is the matter?"

"Nothing... nothing is the matter. I just... I just needed to see you."

Hermione frowned. Here was the proof. He was agitated. Something pressing was on his mind. Perhaps he'd come to the same realization that she had. He knew. He knew she wasn't right for him. He was going to end their relationship. Her heart broke as she gazed up at him.

"I... we... Hermione... things have not been what they should have been these last few months."

She turned away. She couldn't look at him. Not when he was about to shatter her dreams and wishes.

"I have been keeping something from you," he continued. "Something I just realized a few minutes ago."

Hermione hung her head. *Yes, it was too good to be true. He wants nothing beyond being friends. It's just dawned on him.*

"It's all right, Severus. There's no need to explain." She made her way back to the door and opened it. She didn't even look back at him. She didn't want to see his face right now. "We tried. It just didn't work; I understand. I hope we can still be friends."

Severus looked at her in confusion. "What the devil are you blabbering on about, woman?"

She chuckled wryly. "It's obvious, Severus. You see me as only a friend. I get it. I'm not upset. Things just didn't work out."

She felt hands clasping her arms, trying to turn her toward him. She refused to budge.

"Hermione, look at me."

"No, Severus. Just go."

There was silence. Hermione's heart sank. He didn't even have anything to say to her anymore. She was startled out of her melancholy by his next tentative words.

"If I go now, I will leave my heart here with you."

She swung around to look into his eyes. She searched them. They stared back at her intensely.

"I have been denying everything, Hermione. Denying my feelings for you and what needs to happen between the two of us."

"What needs to happen, Severus?" Hermione whispered, barely able to believe he was speaking this way.

"I need to tell you that I love you."

Hermione gave a quick gasp.

"Then I need to tell you that my life is incomplete without you."

Hermione could say nothing. She just stared at Severus as he bore his heart to her.

"After that, it would probably be proper if I... kissed you."

She smiled then. "So, what are you waiting for?" she asked tentatively.

Severus took in a deep breath. "Hermione Granger, I love you and my life is incomplete without you."

Her smile grew wider. "You already said that part. I meant the kiss."

She needn't have worried. He looked into her eyes, and her breath caught in her throat. He was always so reserved... so cautious about letting his feelings be known. Now, however, his eyes blazed with passion. His face shone with love for her. He slowly bowed his head and nuzzled her nose with his.

"I want this kiss to be as special as you are," he whispered.

Her heart rejoiced as his lips finally met hers. They softly caressed her in adoration. She'd waited for what seemed like forever for this moment. Oh, it had been so worth the wait! He was tender, yet passionate all in one. Her lips parted and his tongue ventured into her mouth. Her knees went weak. Severus held her steady as a smirk crossed his lips. She felt his smile and smiled herself, but soon both their grins had disappeared and they became consumed with one another.

Hermione's heart soared at his revelations and this perfect kiss. She frowned as he pulled away, but his tender caress of her jaw line eased the absence of his mouth on hers.

"Severus, what made you come to this realization today?"

Severus looked a bit sheepish as he formulated his answer. "I was frustrated," he admitted. "I had been trying to kiss you for ages now, but every time I gathered up my nerve, something happened to foil my attempts." He smirked as he thought of how to continue. "I was thinking about us, not really knowing how to move forward with our relationship. Arista appeared and pointed her wand at my chest. Everything became clear then."

"Everything?" Hermione asked curiously.

"My feelings for you became evident. Hermione, I'm not a demonstrative man. I've spent a lifetime hiding my emotions." He looked to the floor guiltily. "I've spent a lifetime denying that I even *had* emotions. I hid my emotions so well that I didn't even realize, until it was almost too late, that I am madly in love with you."

Hermione's heart leapt within her. "I think I just came to the same realization not too long ago."

Severus pulled her to him and buried her head in his robes. "I'm sorry. I have been a dunderhead, not showing how much you mean to me."

"Severus..."

"No, Hermione, you don't understand."

"Understand what?"

"My wish... it just wasn't to find someone to love."

Hermione furrowed her brow as she pulled back and looked to Severus. His intense gaze made her insides still. *No one has ever looked at me like that.*

"I wished..." Severus grimaced.

"Wished for what?" Hermione asked in a whisper.

"I wished... for a soul mate."

Hermione gaped at him. She shook her head in disbelief. "Severus, I wished for the same thing."

Severus frowned slightly. "Have you found that soul mate?"

"Have you?"

His hands came up and surrounded her face. "Oh, yes," he murmured. "You've been right in front of me all along."

Hermione's heart soared. She marveled at what he'd said. Part of her couldn't believe it. She couldn't believe that someone she felt to be her soul mate could find her equally as well matched. She stared at him in a mental stupor, not quite sure how to express her feelings for him.

Severus tensed and his face became serious. "You do not feel the same way," he stated sadly.

Breaking out of her mental fog, she gave Severus a determined look. "I don't think it's possible to love someone more than I love you, Severus. You are my soul mate in every way. I... I mean... the thought of being without you makes me feel hollow inside."

Hermione watched as Severus' face filled with joy. She had never before seen such contentment on his usually stern visage. If she had to put it into words, she'd say that he was radiating happiness. Happiness because of her. She was the cause of Severus Snape finally looking contented with his life. She hoped she could make him remain as happy as he was now. She would do everything possible to keep him always looking at her in that way.

Her hands wrapped around his neck and she pulled him to her. She kissed him with abandon. His hands snaked around her backside and he pulled her flush against him. The feel of his body against hers was so very blissful. She couldn't get enough of his hands and mouth seemingly worshiping her. Suddenly, the couple was surrounded by a pale blue light. It began as a small ball at their feet and swirled around them until it reached the top of their heads, then disappeared. Severus and Hermione, however, didn't seem to notice the display at all, as they were so they involved with one another.

Above them, near the ceiling, two balls of light formed. In an instant, Arista and Zora floated along, smiling down on their charges. Arista looked to Zora. Zora's shoulders arched up and she smiled happily at her friend. She extended her hand and Arista shook it enthusiastically. The two disappeared in a flash, leaving behind the sound of their giggling.

Hermione pulled away and looked to the ceiling just in time to see the flashes of light wink out and hear the remaining giggle. She looked back to Severus, who had also turned in the direction of the noise. He glanced back at Hermione curiously.

"I think our fairies are pleased," she explained.

Severus arched an eyebrow at her. "Not as pleased as I am." He descended to her lips again and all thoughts of fairies were forgotten as they concentrated solely on each other.

The End

A/N: Thanks, everybody, for reading this fun bit of fluff. Thanks again to luvsev and morethansirius for their help in beta and cheerleading.