

What Does An Augurey Know?

by theslacker

Hermione experiences something most unexpected on her twenty-first birthday.

Chizpurples Are Parasitic, Too

Chapter 1 of 5

Hermione experiences something most unexpected on her twenty-first birthday.

At the age of twenty, having lived with magic for a good ten years, I was used to many things I would once have considered unusual. Travelling through fireplaces, receiving my post from an owl, or holding a conversation with a portrait was not longer anything other than routine. However, my experiences on my twenty-first birthday managed to shock me to the core.

I'd stumbled out of bed that morning, groggy after yet another late night, and was dragging my leaden body to the bathroom to run a shower, when I caught sight of my reflection out of the corner of my eye. I whipped about to face the mirror.

"Oh my feudal lord!" I found myself exclaiming, my hands flying to my chest. "I've got tits!"

Granted, it's not atypical for me to talk to myself out loud when I'm alone, and I do try to remember to check my breasts from time to time—being a witch does not make you exempt from the risk of breast cancer!—but this was really strange. I shouldn't have been so surprised at having breasts, seeing as they'd been there for some years. On top of that, the language was not the sort I generally use, and my hands were, for want of a better word, *groping*.

"And they're fucking fabulous," I murmured, now looking down at them directly, my hands still working away.

The full strangeness of it hit me then. I had most certainly *not* thought those words. It was not *my* will directing my actions. I shook myself and jerked my hands down, raising my eyes to stare at my baffled reflection. Despite looking into my own brown eyes, seeing my own, lightly freckled face, and recognising my own characteristically bushy, brown hair, there was a niggling sense of surprise.

"What in heaven's name is wrong with me?" I asked, trying hard not to think about Ginny Weasley, Voldemort, diaries, basilisks, or the word 'possession'.

When nothing and nobody answered, I decided that the question had been rhetorical. Unnerved, I continued on my way to the shower.

Working shampoo through my hair as I stood beneath the warmly soothing, drenchingly heavy rush of water, I felt a vague feeling of confusion.

"Oddsfish," I said in a puzzled tone. "This hair really seems most disconcertingly familiar."

I froze. Of course it was bloody familiar to *me*. I'd always had it.

"Who are you?" I demanded, my voice reverberating within the shower stall.

"There's no need to shout," I answered myself crossly. My arms folded over my breasts, and, distracted, a grin spread over my face.

Anyone would have been flustered in my position. "I mean it," I said firmly, trying to continue calmly with my shower, as though I weren't going crazy. "Tell me who you are!"

"Ladies first," was my reply.

Whenever I have an internal debate, the opposing sides are always voiced by Professor McGonagall on the one hand and Fred and George Weasley on the other. Ron would say that it's proof I'm crazy already, which is why I've never bothered to tell him.

McGonagall snapped out her advice with authority. "You mustn't trust him, Miss Granger. You don't know how much power over you he'll attain with knowledge of who you are."

True to form, the twins Weasley were rather less uptight. "But he's already in your head—"

"—with some control over your body—"

"—how could knowing your name make things any worse?"

"Besides, you want to know who *he* is—"

"—don't you?"

"It's only—"

"—a fair exchange."

Decided, I drew myself up straight. "Hermione Granger, sir," I announced, only realising just afterward how ridiculous it felt to announce my name in such a manner, while standing naked in my shower, to a strange man who seemed to be residing in my head.

I snorted. Or rather, he snorted through me.

"What?" I asked, irritated. He had taken up residence in my brain; the least he could do was be respectful.

"You called me sir," he said.

"Well," I replied, not sure of what else to say. I'd been brought up to introduce myself politely.

"It just happens to be somewhat ironic," he said, twisting the corners of my mouth upward. "I used to be called that all the—wait *Hermione Granger?*" He put out my hand in a steadying fashion. "*Fuck!*"

"What is it, sir?" I asked, more than a little perplexed, with a good side serving of concern.

"Miss Granger," he said in frosty tones, "I'm afraid that this may be a little difficult to accept, and I hesitate to say it, but..."

"But *what?*" I shrieked.

He stood my body stiffly, with clenched hands. The water was beginning to run cold.

"I am loath to inform you," he said in measured, clipped syllables, "that you are currently sharing your..." I felt faintly uncomfortable, and supposed that those foggy feelings were his.

"My body," I supplied. He nodded my head.

"Yes," he continued. "With none other than myself..." He paused again, casting about for resolve. "That is..." he floundered.

I was about to lose my patience, when he let the truth fly like a bullet through my brain, leaving a conspicuous hole.

"It's Severus Snape."

And You Thought That Diricawls Were Extinct

Chapter 2 of 5

Hermione has a problem to solve.

Severus Snape thinks that I have fabulous tits, was my first thought. My second was, *I've got a dead man inside of me?* Both thoughts were wrong on so many levels.

"Surely you'd rather your knockers were found attractive than otherwise?" queried George innocently.

McGonagall bristled to my maidenly defense. "He's her horrid ex-professor! It would be best for her health and happiness if he had turned out to be entirely asexual."

"But he's not," was George's abrupt reply.

"And he's *right inside* you, Hermione," said Fred in a tone of voice that left no room for innocent misinterpretation of his meaning.

"And your shower, young lady!" scolded McGonagall.

"Miss Granger?" Snape sounded tentative. "Are you still there?"

I cleared my throat. "Of course. I'm just a bit shocked." I twisted off the taps and grabbed a towel. "You wouldn't happen to know how this came about, would you, sir?"

"I have some idea," he said as I towelled off, adopting his professorial tone. "Miss Granger, what would you do if faced with imminent death, with the clear knowledge that your life had been an utter disaster?"

"Hmmm, I'm not sure," I hummed, rifling through my top drawer. "It's not a matter I've given a lot of thought to."

"The pink lace," said Snape. "I, on the other hand, gave it a great deal of thought. I doubt this needs saying, but I felt royally cheated. I decided that it was only fair for me to get a second chance."

"Did he just casually instruct you on which undergarments to wear?" McGonagall shrieked, while I stood there, frozen in horrified mortification.

Fred was smug. "You may as well give him that—"

"—you know you love it when people appreciate what you do—"

"—and it's not as though anyone else is seeing your knickers."

I shook my head firmly and grabbed the patterned purple.

"Well?" I asked brusquely, snapping clothes on as quickly as possible. "What did you do?"

"There's no need to sound so accusatory," Snape bristled. "You can be certain, Miss Granger, that my idea of a second chance at life did not consist of being stuck with an immature, irritating swot of a girl, with no real autonomy."

I knew I shouldn't have let it, but his comment really stung. "Then you must have really bollocksed up whatever brilliant plan you managed to concoct!" I retorted.

"Such clarity of perception!" he cried. "Could it be the voice of experience that speaks?"

"Berk," I said. I couldn't swear at Professor Snape, but I infused that word with all the venom I possessed.

"Don't listen to him, Hermione," said George. "He doesn't know a thing about you or your life."

"Besides," said McGonagall, "it's only his own insecurity that drives him to attack you in this manner."

Professor Snape? Insecure?

I'd finished dressing, and either one of us was fuming, or both of us were. It was hugely confusing, being aware of both of our feelings. I sat down heavily on the edge of my bed.

"Alright, sir," I said in a calmer tone, "what happened?"

Silence. Surly silence.

"Sir, if you tell me, we may be able to work toward a solution together. I know this situation is distasteful to you."

Snape continued as though he hadn't been sidetracked. "Ahem. I discovered a belief held by Muggles that I considered worth pursuing. They call it reincarnation."

Good Lord. Severus Snape had tried to reincarnate himself?

"I've always held to the belief that one should play to one's strengths, so I set about designing a potion for this. Unfortunately, there was no way to test it, for obvious reasons; hence our present difficulty."

"Oh. I see. It didn't really turn out like reincarnation, did it?" I mused.

My teeth were gritted against each other. "I believe that my attempt has already been labelled a monumental failure," he said. "Shall we move on?"

"Sorry," I said, embarrassed. I knew I could be tactless when I got to thinking on a puzzle.

"No need to be embarrassed, girl," instructed McGonagall. "Severus Snape doesn't know the meaning of tact."

I was a bit irritated at that. Who had neglected to teach him?

"You'd best tell me exactly how this potion was designed," I said. "Perhaps we can work out a way to counteract its effects."

Anxiety grabbed hold of me. "I don't suppose you could get a hold of my body?" Snape sneered.

"Oh! I..." I hadn't thought of that. "Sir... I'm afraid... it's been more than two years."

"Since you managed to do anything useful?" he said mockingly, but my fists clenched slightly, and my heart picked up speed, and somehow, knowing that Severus Snape was afraid forced me to see, at long last, that he was only human. It was the element that had been missing all those years, though I could see in retrospect that I'd witnessed his fear before. I'd seen him panicky over Lupin, though at fourteen I still didn't expect adults to be just as frightened as we could be, and saw only his anger. In sixth year, when he'd come hurtling out of that classroom, ordering Luna and myself to look to Flitwick, he'd been shaking. I'd not thought to attribute it to fear. Even at his end, desperately trying to convince Voldemort not to kill him... well, I hadn't had time to spare a thought for what Snape was feeling. And yet, his fear of death must have been tremendous, for him to go to the extent of creating a potion of previously unheard-of capabilities, and to use it on himself without previous testing.

Not only was he human, then, but he was also incredibly brave. He'd faced the threat of death every day, despite his terror. A bloom of admiration burst open within me.

"If you are as utterly useless as I ought to have expected," said Snape, interrupting my thoughts, "then I suggest you get used to having me around."

"Hermione?" George popped in. "Respect him if you must, but he's still—"

"—an absolute prick."

I had to agree. "Sir, if *you* have any good ideas, I'd be delighted to hear them. If not, please keep your silence while I think." With that, I allowed my head to fall back on the mattress and closed my eyes.

"...Are you thinking?" Snape asked timidly after about fifteen minutes. I smiled. "You haven't fallen asleep, have you?" I'd never have expected a Snape out of his depth to be so adorable.

"You don't mean that, Hermione!" exclaimed Fred. George made a gagging noise.

"Of course not *that* way," replied McGonagall. "Even if he weren't ugly, lacking in hygiene, temperamental, argumentative, domineering, and all round disagreeable, he's much too *old* for her."

"Yeah, well, even if she *did* start thinking crazy things—"

"—he hasn't got a body."

"So she'd be better off asking Lovegood for a spare corpse," concluded Fred.

My eyes flew open as I sat up with a jolt, startling Snape.

"Professor? We're going to pay someone a visit."

Make Like A Lethifold And Be Sneaky

Chapter 3 of 5

Hermione visits Luna at work.

Who was surprised when Luna Lovegood first announced that she'd got a job working at the Necroikos? It was just the sort of career she'd set out for herself, misty Miss Death-Is-Just-Another-Mystery Lovegood.

So I'll admit it. Luna has always irritated me. I mean, nobody's that "unique" naturally. It's a sickeningly obvious ploy for attention, that sort of affectedness. Granted, the wizarding world is a tad over the top generally, always convinced it's chock-a-block full of relentless drama and mystery, but Luna takes it to a whole other level of insufferability.

Nevertheless, it was Luna Lovegood who was, paradoxically, my hope of sanity. If I wanted Snape to inhabit a new home, I was going to have to find him one.

I knocked on the front door of the Necroikos, a building ever-so-tastefully designed to imitate a mausoleum. I'd never visited Luna at her workplace before (surprise, surprise) and was a bit startled when my knock was answered by a very obvious vampire.

"Hi! I'm Hermione Granger. I was wondering if I could see Luna Lovegood? If she's not busy at the moment."

"Please, come in," he said, very solemnly. "She is taking her lunch."

I followed the vampire's retreating back through the shadowy halls of the Necroikos.

"Now you know why the other students always compared Professor Snape to a vampire," McGonagall stated, in a very conclusive tone.

It was true. I had known all my facts, and had recognised the vampire instantly, but somehow, actually coming across a vampire, I was struck by the similarities. Snape's build was right, though the vampire was rather taller, and there was an inexplicably intimidating aura about the vampire that Snape had always carried with him. Their colouring was very similar, and their facial features were equally strong and sharp. Even their voices had a similar timbre, and if I wasn't mistaken, the vampire's robes were *billowing*.

"Professor Snape?" I whispered. "Are you part vampire?"

"I'm a disembodied soul, Miss Granger," he whispered back. I hadn't realised that petulance could be transmitted through a whisper. "I'm not much of anything right now."

The vampire stopped up ahead. With the length of leg that accompanied his considerable height, it had been impossible for me to keep up at all. I trotted up to the doorway he stood by. He nodded gravely, then opened the door.

"Miss Lovegood, a Miss Granger here to see you."

"Thank you, Gregory. Any luck with Mr. Lockhart?" There was something odd about her voice.

"I'm afraid not, Miss Lovegood. I shall, however, continue to search."

"Thank you, Gregory."

Gregory nodded, bowed, and swept away. I stepped into the room. It was nearly enough to make me salivate...the walls were literally lined with books, the desk was piled with them, and there were stacks of more lying haphazardly about the floor.

"Hello, Hermione," said Luna, "I haven't seen you since Harry and Ginny's wedding."

"No," I said. I was taken aback and a bit distracted; Luna's office was not at all what I expected.

"What brings you here?" she asked.

"Ah!" I remembered my pre-fabricated story. "I'm taking a course in Comparative Culture, and I'd like to write my term paper on the difference between wizarding and Muggle approaches to burial. I was hoping you might be able to show me around a bit."

Luna smiled. "Of course," she said, "that sounds fascinating." She popped the last bit of her sandwich into her mouth and stood, clearing away her lunch things with a wave of her wand. "I'll bring you to the Somatorium, where we keep the bodies."

I knew I was there on a particular mission, but I'm Hermione Granger...I can't help but be curious about everything. Besides, the walk along those dim corridors was a bit creepy.

"Have they changed the regulations on vampires, Luna?" I asked. "I'd heard that something was being done, but I never got the particulars."

Luna's eyes narrowed. "Only minimally," she ground out. "They're allowed to work unsupervised, but the positions they can fill are very limited. They have to file reports to their employers constantly. They don't have to be paid as much as other workers, and they don't need to be given a reason to be sacked. It's atrocious. Gregory knows far more about how this place works than anybody else and is ten times more efficient, but he'll never get past the lowest rung, while I... I got my position almost immediately."

I couldn't suppress the old indignance. "I can't believe it!" I cried.

"Appalling!" cried McGonagall.

"That Gregory fellow seemed a decent chap, too," mused George.

"If a bit stiff and formal," Fred added.

"Reminds me of someone," the two chimed.

They had a point. I added it to the checklist of similarities.

"Thank you, Hermione," Luna said. "It's very refreshing to hear someone else feels that way about it." Suddenly, I knew what was so odd about Luna's voice; it was the very fact that it wasn't odd. The breathy, mystic tone was a thing of the past. I found myself thinking that I might get to like this new Luna.

We entered the Somatorium. Luna explained things in great detail as I wandered around. It looked much warmer than a Muggle morgue. Clear, lit cases were set into the walls, and the bodies lay within. They were all well-dressed, and looked as though they were sleeping. There were small plaques beneath each case, stating name, age, and cause of death. A table was situated in the centre of the room to lay a body upon for examination and spellwork. I nearly jumped when I found Lockhart.

"He meant *Gilderoy* Lockhart?" I shrieked.

Luna broke off. "Why, yes. He died this past week. We've been trying to get a hold of a family member or friend to take him away for burial. Each body is given ten days to be claimed before we dispose of it. Unfortunately, the Ministry doesn't pay for the proper burial of an unclaimed."

At that moment, Gregory appeared.

"Silently and stealthily, just like a certain someone," George pointed out.

"Miss Lovegood, the director has expressed an urgent wish to see you," he said.

"I'll be back in a moment, Hermione," she told me.

Alone, I continued to peruse the cases.

"Was I... claimed?"

Scratch that...not alone.

"Yes," I assured him, "you were."

"By whom?"

Oh, he wasn't going to like it. "Harry."

"Better than nobody, I suppose," he grumbled. "Where was I buried?"

"Hogwarts."

"Damn. I wish that boy wouldn't think he can assume things."

I just rolled my eyes. It's not as though Harry had had a way of asking him.

"Miss Lovegood has changed somewhat," he said.

"Yes, she's rather easier to take now, don't you think?"

"The only reason you never liked her in school was because she was cleverer than you," Snape announced.

Ouch. That was patently untrue. I'd been the cleverest witch of my age.

McGonagall coughed lightly. "My dear, you were very clever, of course, but..."

Double ouch. But it wasn't as though it had mattered to me that much. I wouldn't have had a problem with someone being smarter than I was, it was just that Luna was genuinely irritating.

Fred disagreed. "Actually, Hermione..."

"Fine," I snapped.

"I beg your pardon?" said Snape.

"We should choose a body for you," I covered.

Snape groaned. "I knew we were here on some hare-brained idea."

"How about Lockhart?" I suggested spitefully. "You could find out what it's like to be attractive."

Snape just laughed. "Don't think I'd allow you any liberties with him for having helped me!"

"Oh, shush, you!" I stammered. "I was *thirteen!* Don't try to tell me you had better taste at that age!"

Oops. I'd forgotten about the whole Harry's-mum debacle, but apparently, Snape was over it.

"No, I suppose I didn't," he admitted.

"And really," I continued, as things fell into place, "it would be perfect! Lockhart was very ill, and little is yet known about Memory Charms. It wouldn't be too hard to believe that they'd accidentally labelled him as dead. Also, the fact that his personality would have changed completely when he got his wits back wouldn't need to be explained."

But Snape was firm. "No," he said, "and no. No self-respecting man would accept a future in that ponce's body. Besides, he's too old."

"Too *old?*" I asked. "Are you forgetting something? You weren't exactly just out of short pants when you died." I walked along, coming to Newt Scamander, a bit aggravated with Snape. He wasn't making this any easier.

"Miss Granger, I designed my potion for the sake of getting a second chance at life. I did not design it to bring me back to the age I'd been. However, being sane, I was perfectly clear on the fact that I did not want to relive my adolescence. I geared the potion to bring me back to the age of twenty-one."

Well, that explained the timing. It was then that Luna re-entered the room.

"Luna!" I exclaimed. "This place is fascinating!" And I meant it. Creepy, but fascinating.

"Yes," she agreed. "I see you've found Newt."

"Did you know each other?" I asked.

Luna nodded, smiling. "He introduced me to Gregory."

"Bonnie Charlie's tartan underpants!" exclaimed McGonagall. "She's got a thing for the vampire!"

"Not that that's..."

"...shocking, or unacceptable. After all..."

"...vampires are people, too!"

I was a bit bothered with myself for being bothered about it. Still, despite my discomfort, I couldn't deny the appeal of a smartly dressed, well-mannered man with a striking appearance.

Luna brought my attention to the case above Newt's. "That's a young man who was found along with Newt in the Amazon. He's not yet been identified." And, indeed, his plaque read: UNIDENTIFIED. APPROX. 23 YEARS. CAUSE OF DEATH UNKNOWN.

"Perfect," I breathed. And he was. Strong facial features, thick, dark hair that just asked to be tousled, and very pleasing proportions.

"Necrophiliac," muttered George.

"Yes," said Luna, "We take care of them quite well. We take a good deal of pride in our work."

The rest of my tour of the Necroikos didn't really process. I was much too distracted. I'd found a perfect candidate. How was I going to steal the corpse?

A Knarl Can't Just Accept What It's Offered

Chapter 4 of 5

A solution is found.

"Who said anything about stealing a body?" Snape asked. "Perhaps if you weren't such a know-it-all, you'd have asked the Potions master if such a thing were even necessary, which it is not."

My voice was sugary. "If you'd care to explain, dear Potions master?"

"I've been thinking about it a great deal, and I realise that the flaw in my potion was that it did not select a body for me. I am certain that I can design another potion that will transfer me now to a particular body. All we need is a bit of that young man."

He'd worked this out in his *head*? In the space of *two days*? The man was a Potions *genius*. I couldn't help but be a bit excited.

"Like Polyjuice, you mean?"

"Yes, there would be certain similarities. However, as I'm sure neither of us are eager to delay, you'll be happy to hear that, with the necessary inclusion of an ostrich egg in this potion, it shouldn't take any longer than two days to brew."

"The difficulty," I pointed out, "is getting a bit of the body. Somehow, I doubt the wards around dead wizards are of a level I could break."

We put that thought to stew in the back of our minds while we set to work on assembling Snape's potion. He really is a genius. Snape told me particulars about what he expected to happen while we worked. Apparently, he wouldn't remember his life as Snape. That was one of the first things that had attracted him to reincarnation—the fact that few people claimed to be able to remember their past lives. He had arranged it so that he would have enough of his new body's memories to get by as that individual for as long as necessary. His greatest fear had been that he would be placed as a Muggle.

"Not that it would really have mattered, as I wouldn't have remembered anything about magic, but such a thing is bound to distress a person."

"How could you have been reincarnated as a Muggle? Isn't magic an intrinsic part of a wizard?"

Snape shook his head. "Like a physical or mental ability, it's tied to your body. It's not as much a part of who you are as wizards like to think. It's only as much a part of you as any other talent. Being a wizard is like being an incredible singer—of course it affects who you are, but it isn't one of the things at the root of what you are. That's why there's really no excuse for our widespread inability to get along with Muggles."

I tried not to be distracted by thoughts of conducting breaking research on wizarding DNA.

Meanwhile, brewing with Snape was proving to be far more fun than I would ever have thought possible. *Being* with Snape was more fun than I would have thought. We got on well together. I was, surprisingly, going to miss him.

"It's true, Hermione. Sickening as it is—"

"—you're more than a little fond of the old bat."

The potion was simmering away on its second day, and I was frying up some breakfast, when the post owl delivered my paper. There was an engaging photograph on the front page from the International Wizarding Chess Finals. I reached for the paper, wondering if Ron—

"A photograph!" I shouted. "Snape, will a photograph work?"

"You needn't shout, Miss Granger! I'm right here!"

"Sorry. Will a photograph work?" I asked again.

Snape thought. My breakfast sizzled.

"You know, Miss Granger," he said, "I think it will."

"Yes!" I shrieked, throwing my arms up in victory, forgetting that I still held onto the frying pan. Egg, potato, and ham plastered my ceiling. I laughed.

"Breakfast is cancelled! We've got a potion to finish!"

Severus Snape, true to form, did not hesitate to burst my bubble.

"Clean up that mess, Miss Granger," he said irritably. "And do not think I'm going to let you go without breakfast when you're working on such an important potion; I shall not."

I was about to object, when I remembered that he did have that ability to move my body as his own. He hadn't since that first day, and it had slipped my mind that he could. Most considerate of him, really. I cleared the ceiling with a wave of my wand and selected two new eggs.

"Of course, it won't work half so well as a bit of the man would," Snape told me. "The influence will be somewhat weaker. I may, I'm afraid, take on some of my old characteristics, and may possibly have foggy senses of recognition toward things and people I knew."

I smiled. I wasn't going to let him know that that was fine by me.

It was an easy thing to get Luna's permission to take some pictures. For the sake of appearances, I took several of the place. Gregory and Luna were good enough to allow me to take pictures of them at work, too.

"I can't imagine being with a guy who didn't even call me by my first name," I said to Snape as I snapped photos of our target corpse.

"That's ridiculous," said Snape. "It doesn't matter. And who said that they're together?"

"They're dating," I told him. Really, it was obvious. I couldn't believe I hadn't noticed immediately. If Gregory weren't the one behind Luna's sparkling little engagement ring, I was a bowtruckle.

"Speaking of which," I said, trying to sound casual, "isn't it high time you started calling me Hermione? I'm not in school anymore, you know."

I tried to keep my hands steady as my camera clicked in the resulting silence.

Finally, Snape said, "We're not together, Miss Granger."

"No! Of course not! But—"

"We've got all the photos we need, I think. Shall we head back?"

Jabberknolls Can't Forget

Chapter 5 of 5

The story ends.

The potion was foul, as was to be expected. It also made me feel positively wretched, which I had not expected. The pain that shot through my head was so incredible, I must have passed out. When I came to, I was lying on my bathroom floor, cold and cramped, with my head still throbbing, and alone.

"Snape?" I called out, not knowing if I was hoping he'd answer or not. "... Severus?"

He was most definitely gone. Dizzy, I pulled myself up to my feet and looked at myself in the mirror. I was a mess. I felt like my insides had all been unceremoniously scooped out while I'd lain there, leaving me with a core of hollowness within my empty ribcage, and I wanted to cry my eyes out, but...

I had to get to the Necroikos. Frantically, I yanked clean robes out of my closet, threw my hair up into some sort of order, and cleaned my face. I rushed out of my apartment, raced to my Apparition spot, and only took to or three calming breaths before turning into the tightness of Apparition. I raced up the front steps and hammered on the door. Gregory opened it with his usual cool grace.

"Miss Granger? I'm afraid this isn't a good time..."

"Let me through!" I demanded, barreling past him, racing down those muffled halls until I came to the Somatorium.

Luna was there, wringing her hands. A young man with strong facial features, thick, dark hair that just asked to be tousled, and very pleasing proportions sat on the centre table, smiling handsomely. Luna gasped when she saw me. She was all a-flutter.

"Hermione! I'm so glad you're here! This has never happened before in my time here, but apparently we misread his diagnosis! The man wasn't dead at all!"

I sighed hugely, relief threatening to drown me, draining the strength out of my wobbly knees.

"I'm terribly sorry," said the young man. "I didn't mean to cause you any inconvenience. My name's Rolf Scamander. I was working with my father in the Amazon, when a

creature we were unfamiliar with attacked. I have no idea what happened between that moment and finding myself here." He looked at me and looked a bit confused.

"I feel as though I know you," he said, hopping off of the table and coming towards me. Luna was standing there helplessly. "What's your name?"

Close to, I saw something that rendered me speechless. Rolf Scamander had deep, dark, intense eyes that I had seen before.

"Please," I said once I'd managed to regain some semblance of composure, "Call me Hermione."

"Hermione," he said, smiling.

Rolf Scamander adjusted well to his new life. Apparently, he'd grown up travelling all over the place, alone with his father, his mother having died when he was very young. Because of the constant uprooting, he'd never made strong friendships or come to think of any one place as home. There was little that he remembered about himself from before the accident, but we found that he was a very intelligent wizard, terrifically skilled at Potions, though somewhat shaky with Transfiguration. The accident had no lasting negative effects on his health, though his hair grew mysteriously darker, and people who had met him before said that his voice was rather deeper and somehow different in tone.

Rolf got along very well with Ron, and they often played chess very competitively against each other. His relationship with Harry, though good, was never quite so natural. With all my friends, he was courteous and humorous, but ever so formal. Only when we were alone did he seem completely at ease. I already half-knew him, of course, and he perhaps maintained some sense of connexion to me.

Sometimes, when I look into his eyes, my heart aches for the man he was, the biting, volatile man I knew before. I see his old person shining through, and I know that it's better this way—he's happy, he's what Severus Snape would have been under better circumstances, he doesn't carry the hurt anymore that he shouldered for so long—but I still ache. Sometimes, when I watch him lean over a cauldron, a look of intense concentration on his face, I smile, selfishly relieved that his interests are familiar to me. Sometimes, when I watch him talking with Mum or Dad, I wonder if an amicable relationship would have been possible between them and his old self.

And sometimes, when I'm looking through my book titles for a read, I pass over my old Care of Magical Creatures book. My fingers will pause over it, and sometimes I'll laugh, and sometimes I'll cry. I never thought, when I'd carefully looped *Hermione Granger* onto the front page, in writing almost too neat for a twelve-year-old, that one day I'd glow with pleasure and pride to tell the people I meet: I am Hermione Scamander.