

The Language of Flowers

by duniazade

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A/N: A birthday gift for Averygoodun, who had prompted with "Snape, Hermione, an onion."

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Chapter 1 of 1

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Professor Granger was not happy. It was Valentine's Day, and her hair was frizzing. No amount of Sleekeazy's would work today. She'd have to ask Snape again for his special formula.

The owl flew into the Great Hall, dodged the fluttering Cupids, dropped its burden in Hermione's bowl of cornflakes, and zoomed away without pausing.

"What's that?" asked Sinistra, leaning closer to see.

Sprout snorted.

"It's an onion flower," answered Neville. "Perfectly formed," he added lovingly, turning the umbel over, the better to admire the long green stalk and the spherical inflorescence. A few drops of milk flew in Hermione's direction.

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"To me it looks like a dandelion, only sturdier," shrugged Sinistra.

"Like Hermione," piped up Assistant Lovegood.

"It has absolutely nothing in common with a dandelion," said Neville indignantly. "The dandelion clock contains a multitude of achenes, each of them attached to a pappus of fine silky hairs which enable wind-aided dispersal. Dandelions can reproduce asexually, while the onion..."

Professor Trelawney gave a sudden gasp. "Oh, dear, I see something dark approaching."

At the other end of the table, Snape scowled.

Professor Granger shot Sybil a venomous look, picked the damn thing out of her bowl, and finished her breakfast.

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Valentine's Day was a harassing affair. As usual, some of the staff had skived. Flitwick was at Gringotts. Hagrid was buying slug repellent. Nobody even asked where Snape had disappeared to after lunch.

Hermione was grumpily scarfing her dinner when the owl let the object fall right into her mashed potatoes.

"Damn!" She reached for her wand and cast a quick cleaning charm.

"What...?" asked Minerva, peering over the top of her glasses.

Hermione had already picked the thing up and wrapped it in a napkin.

"Excuse me," she said abruptly, pushing her chair back.

Minerva looked shocked, but said nothing.

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"Enter."

He was standing in front of the fireplace, looking bored. "I suppose you've come for your hair lotion?"

She silently deposited the object on the mantelpiece.

In the flickering light, it shone with an amber gleam. The butter from the mashed potatoes had given it a jewel-like, almost mythical splendour.

"An onion, Professor Granger? How... remarkable."

"What," she said, grasping the first button, "has many layers..."

The button slid out.

"... lives underground..."

The second button surrendered.

"... has pungent humour..."

She tugged him closer.

"... and elicits tears?"

"Except from the sharpest knives," he murmured before kissing her.