

Basil, Aubergines, and a new Life

by karelia

She craved the mundane. And found it.

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Chapter 1 of 1

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Disclaimer: No matter what I try, I don't own it.

Hermione took the loaf out of the oven, inhaling the scent of fresh bread. After dodging the public amidst speculations of her break-up with Ron, doing mundane things felt good. Her new home was in a Muggle neighbourhood—perhaps to embrace her heritage, perhaps to avoid wizards. War hero or not, she craved normalcy.

The witch brushed some flour off her jeans. She looked through the window into her postage-stamp-sized but very own garden. *Time to inspect the manor's grounds*, she thought and then picked up the plants she'd bought earlier.

The centre of her tiny garden was taken up by a manicured lawn. She'd change that once she found out more about Muggle-style gardening. The edge all around the lawn was sparsely populated with heavily pruned bushes. "Ah. The tomatoes can go here," she muttered and dug out several holes in the south-facing corner to plant the seedlings.

For the parsley she chose an east-facing spot, and the rose bush would have to go westward. Then she stood, gazing at the remaining herbs and wondering where they'd grow healthily.

"Those will do best on your kitchen windowsill."

Hermione's head flew around, her eyes wide. "Professor Sn—?" She'd seen him die. "No, it can't be."

His almost-sneer turned into an almost-smirk. "Oh, it can, Granger. As long as you don't call the Prophet on me, I'll leave you alone." He looked her up and down, his expression rapidly changing from disdain to the kind of appreciation only a man could show. Then he growled, "But do me a favour and keep the basil and oregano on your kitchen windowsill. Even if you plant them near the tomatoes, the basil most certainly won't last. Basil needs heat."

"Er. Thanks. I think." Hermione cursed herself for sounding like a fool.

Again, he regarded her with that curious expression. "On the other hand," he drawled, "you could apply some *appropriate* Charms and have a magical garden."

Hermione wanted to bang her head against a wall. *Why didn't I think of that???*

"Look—" now he sounded impatient "—it's not the end of the world to start over again. It's life. I promise you things do get better."

She met his eyes, surprised. "They do?" She wasn't certain.

"They do," he confirmed.

"I'll take your word for it," she muttered, unconvinced.

The herbs on her windowsill thrived; the tomatoes started growing properly once she'd spelled the garden according to Snape's suggestions.

Soon, squash of various colours and aubergines were growing. Hermione wondered if her memory was ailing; she didn't recall planting them. She'd never even cooked aubergines.

Snape caught her staring at the large purple fruit. "They taste very pleasant when stuffed with mushrooms and feta." His voice suddenly sent shivers down her spine.

"They do?" Her voice was squeaky.

"Let me prove it to you. Dinner will be ready at seven." He didn't await her answer and turned to leave.

Hermione panicked. *I'll get a bottle of wine!* It was easier said than done. Tesco's offered no expertise on what goes with stuffed aubergine with *don't-know-what-else*. The independent, small off-licence around the corner, however, provided a crash course in what wine goes with what, and she came away with a bottle of Argentinean *Malbec*.

When he opened the door to her knock, soft music played; it was beautiful, nothing she'd ever heard before.

"Thank you," she said softly as he offered her a glass of red.

"Thank *you*," he said, raising his own glass, smiling.

Hermione took the loaf out of the oven, inhaling the scent of fresh bread. *It smells so wonderful...* Then she smiled to herself. Scents these days—pleasant scents—reminded her of Severus.

Ever since that first dinner he'd cooked for her, creating meals for each other had become a tradition. Today marked the first day of the tomato season. She'd picked up two ripe beef tomatoes that morning and handed them to Severus. "You make those. I'll bring the bread."

He'd grinned at her. "As you wish."

It would be just a mundane evening. Just the way she loved it.

7 x 100 words.

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Luvsev tickled my muse with a three-word prompt: flour, new music (can be newly discovered music), garden