

Solving the Unsolvable Puzzle

by *linlawless*

Severus helps Hermione cope with her frustrations when she discovers he possesses a talent she only wishes she had. Written for the August 2010 Challenge at the Potter Pr0n Prompts LiveJournal community.

A One-Shot

Chapter 1 of 1

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A/N: The theme for this month was Order of the Phoenix (so at least one of the main characters had to be an Order member) and the prompt was "talent." The rules for the challenge required that the story be 500-1000 words long (this is 998 words, excluding the title and this note), and that it include at least one sex act.

Many thanks to Atuliel, who helped me angst my way through two other versions of this before I finally settled on this one. Also thanks to everyone who voted and/or commented!

Enjoy! (And leave a review if you're so inclined!)

"Miss Granger! What are you doing with that ridiculous toy?"

Hermione nearly jumped out of her chair at Professor Snape's irritated query. She barely managed to hang on to the item in question, and she turned to glare at him. "That's Professor Granger, or Hermione, *Severus*. One would think a man of your purported intelligence would have managed to get that straight in the two years I've been teaching here."

He said, "Fine, *Professor Granger*, but you haven't answered my question. Why did you bring that toy to dinner?"

Hermione rolled her eyes at his continuing formality with her. They had developed an odd, snappish friendship since she had returned as the newly minted Transfiguration professor, when McGonagall had taken over as Headmistress. She decided not to worry about it for now. Eventually, he would drop the formality – probably.

Now, Hermione sighed and confessed, "I can't solve the damned thing. My cousin sent it to me last week, and I've been unable to concentrate on anything else ever since. If I could just solve it, then I could get back to normal. Or as normal as is possible around here, anyway."

"Give it here," Snape ordered, holding out his hand for the Rubik's cube that was the bane of Hermione's existence.

"Why?" she asked, but did as requested. "You won't have any better luck, I'm sure. I'll probably just order one of those solution books ..." Her voice trailed off as she realized that he was twisting the thing and the colors were lining up.

Within minutes, he handed it back to her. Hermione stared at it disbelievingly. "How did you do that?" she demanded. "Did you use magic?"

"Of course not," he sneered. "You *watched* me do it. Did you see any magic?"

"No," Hermione admitted, "but I've been working on it for days, and I couldn't even get half of it."

Snape shrugged, smirking slightly. "It's easy enough. It's merely a matter of systematically applying logic."

"But – it's *impossible!*"

"Obviously not – you were *watching*," he reminded her. "Here, I'll do it again."

She mixed up the sides as thoroughly as she could, then handed it back to him. He turned it over several times, before making a series of rapid moves.

Minutes later, he handed it back to her, perfectly solved again. "Why can't I do that?" Hermione groused.

"Apparently, you aren't as clever as you like to think."

Hermione absorbed that, then returned to the matter at hand. "Do it again." At his look, she added, "Please. I have to figure out ..."

He sighed, his look appraising. "Fine. When you've finished your meal, you may accompany me back to my quarters and I'll teach you. Now, let me eat in peace."

"Fine," she said. She simply *had* to solve this puzzle, even if it meant spending the next several hours with Severus in full-blown nasty teacher mode.

Twenty-five minutes later, Hermione sat beside Severus on a plush sofa in his surprisingly bright and cheerful sitting room. He handed the cube to her for the third time since they had arrived here; as she had done the previous two times, she mixed it up again, and he immediately solved it again.

As he did, Hermione found herself watching his hands, so swift and sure. She felt her heart beating rapidly and her skin growing warm, and she realized she was getting turned on by his ability to solve that damned puzzle.

He wasn't in nasty teacher mode, though. Instead, he seemed amused by her persistence, and there was an odd, warm light in his eyes, one she had never seen there before.

For the next two hours, Hermione repeatedly mixed up the cube, Severus repeatedly solved it, and Hermione grew increasingly aroused. She didn't even wonder why he was so patiently solving the thing over and over again. She only knew that he became more efficient – faster – each time.

By the time he solved it for the sixth time, she forgot she was supposedly trying to learn it herself, and by the twelfth time, she was so aroused that she was panting and squirming in her seat.

Eventually, when Hermione had lost count completely, Snape leaned close and purred in her ear, "Are you well, Hermione?"

"Y-yes," she stammered, barely noticing that he had at last used her given name. She resisted the urge to fan herself – or jump him.

"Really? You seem ... frustrated."

She moaned, unable to hold back any longer. The mere thought of his clever mind and his skillful hands, topped off with his silky voice in her ear, and she was suddenly coming, right there on his sofa, when he hadn't even physically touched her.

When her orgasm had subsided, she found him watching her, his eyes hot. He purred, "It hardly seems fair, Hermione, that I've been doing all the work, while you've been getting all the pleasure."

He slanted his mouth across hers, and Hermione forgot about the cube. She returned his kiss eagerly, tearing at his clothing until he finally magicked it away, along with hers. She *had* to have this impossibly clever, utterly confusing, suddenly sexy man, and she had to have him *now*.

He shifted his attention from kissing her mouth to kissing her – well, everywhere, really, much to Hermione's delight. She reciprocated as best she could, until eventually, he whispered, "I can't wait. I'll make it up to you later," and thrust inside her. They both groaned at the intense pleasure that engendered, and after only a few thrusts, Hermione convulsed with pleasure once again, and Severus followed her into blissful oblivion.

Hours later, sated and drowsy in Severus's bed, it occurred to Hermione that her Rubik's cube was hardly the most pleasurable puzzle she might never solve.