

The Mystery Man

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Hermione gets a bouquet from an admirer. Who is it?

Oneshot

Chapter 1 of 1

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Hermione eyed the box that had been set on her table. It was a simple box, long and white, and rather flat. There was a card attached. Lifting the envelope, she looked down at her name scrawled on the front. She didn't recognize the handwriting.

Opening the card, she read the message quickly.

On this first anniversary of good's triumph over evil, I wanted you to know that I was thinking about you and your contribution on that night.

I'd like to thank you in a more personal way. If you'd care to find out who I am, meet me at the Three Broomsticks at seven tonight.

~An Admirer

Hermione set the card down and opened the box. She found a bouquet of red roses greeting her. She lifted them out of the box and smelled them. Transfiguring the box into a vase, she arranged the flowers into it and set them on her table. It was then she noticed there were eleven roses in the bouquet. She wondered at the abnormal number and at the identity of her admirer.

She decided right then to meet the person. She was too inquisitive to just let it be. Maybe if it was someone she was interested in, she'd ask him to accompany her to the celebration that was to follow that evening at eight. Harry would be there with Ginny, Ron would be with Lavender, and she had been feeling the odd one out because she wasn't going with anyone. Maybe she wouldn't be alone after all tonight.

Later that evening, she eyed herself in the mirror. She'd pulled her hair up into a pretty chignon and had placed one of the roses on either side of it. The pretty black chiffon dress she wore fell to the floor and swirled around her as she moved, making her feel elegant and sexy all in one. She sighed as she finished up her makeup. She hoped that whomever she was meeting would be someone she could get along with. So many men she'd met just wanted to be seen with the 'Golden Girl' from the trio. She had pretty much given up on dating entirely.

Picking up her purse, she gave one last glance in the mirror before turning and Apparating away to what she hoped would be an enjoyable evening.

A few minutes later she walked into the Three Broomsticks. She waved to Rosmerta as she made her way to a table toward the center of the establishment. She noticed Severus Snape scowling at her from a corner table. She nodded a greeting to him, but he averted his eyes. It seemed that his scowl grew more intense despite his looking away from her.

She furrowed her brow and took her seat. She mulled over Severus. She'd had the chance to work with him on occasion since the war had ended. She'd consulted with him several times in her job at the Ministry and had found him always to be intelligent and thorough with the help he'd given her. He'd not sneered at her desire to help

House-elves in her position at Magical Creatures, nor had he poked fun at her when she'd made errors. His knowledge of Pureblood society and their treatment of House-elves had helped her to take the first steps in helping elves to be treated better within their households.

She'd thought they'd developed a sort of friendship in the last few months, but his reaction to her tonight just made her question everything about their relationship previous to that moment. Perhaps she'd misread him, and he'd only tolerated her because she was a Ministry employee. She knew the Ministry was keeping an eye on him, looking and hoping for the opportunity to throw him in Azkaban. So far he had been a model citizen. Could his friendship only have been because he wanted to keep out of the Ministry's scrutiny? She sighed and examined her hands. The man was an enigma and always would be, despite her wanting to get to know him better.

Rosmerta came over, and Hermione ordered a pumpkin juice. A few minutes later she was sipping it slowly, wondering where this mystery admirer could be. She glanced over at Snape and saw him looking at her with a pained look. Indeed, she must have been mistaken about him before. He definitely didn't look like he wanted anything to do with her at the moment. She looked away and took another sip of juice.

Checking her watch, she noted it was already quarter past seven. Her mystery man hadn't shown up yet, and she was beginning to feel a bit foolish. Perhaps this was some cruel joke played by George and Ron? She sighed again and looked down at her drink. A shadow loomed over her, and she looked up again to see Severus standing at her table, extending a red rose in her direction.

"Would you like to take a walk, Hermione?" he asked cautiously.

Hermione's mouth dropped open as she eyed the flower. "It was you?" she asked incredulously.

Severus frowned and let his hand drop to his side, the rose still clutched in it. "I feared you wouldn't be thrilled to know it was me," he stated grimly.

He walked away from the table. All Hermione could do was gape after him. Never in her wildest dreams would she have thought that Severus Snape would have an attraction to her. Never! Yet... as she watched him move to the door and step out into the night, she found herself yearning to know him better. He obviously felt something for her, and she was not adverse to starting something with him.

"Well, get going, you ninny!" she whispered to herself.

Throwing a few Knuts on the table, she raced out of the pub and into the night. Severus was quickly stalking towards Hogwarts. She ran to catch up with him.

"Severus, wait!"

Severus wheeled around and eyed her narrowly. "Come to get a last laugh, Miss Granger?"

She caught up with him and struggled to catch her breath. "Of course not! I... I'm sorry about in there. I was just surprised that it was you." His angry look had her grabbing his arm to prevent him from wheeling around and stalking off again. "No, not in a bad way!"

She looked into his eyes. "It's just that when I came in tonight you glared at me, and I thought perhaps I had mistaken us to be friends when you didn't feel the same way. Then when you handed me the rose, I knew you had sent the bouquet. I just didn't think that you felt anything like that for me."

"You're not upset that it's me, then?" Severus asked in a gruff voice.

She looked at him. She looked beyond his bad hair and teeth. She saw a noble man with a sharp wit and an intelligence that surpassed her own. She marveled that someone who had held her in such disdain when she was a youth could possibly find anything attractive about her now. At long last, she smiled at him.

"I'm rather thrilled, if you must know."

He arched an eyebrow at her then, and she found her stomach doing flip-flops. He extended his arm to her. She wrapped hers securely in his.

"Shall we be off, then?" Severus said seductively. "I believe we have a celebration to attend."

Hermione smiled at him. "I'm ready when you are."

He pulled her close, and before she could catch her breath, he'd spun and Apparated them away.

The End

A/N: Prompt by MuseAmusant: On the first anniversary of the Battle of Hogwarts, Hermione is startled to receive a bouquet of roses from an anonymous admirer.