

The Healing Power of Rain

by tobeacting

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Dinner and Light Conversation

Chapter 1 of 2

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Rain beat against the windows of Hermione's flat. While several deplored the "dreary" rain, she had always found the rhythm calm and soothing. There was little she liked better than a day of rain when she could stay home preferably with a new book. Unfortunately this was not one of those days. Firstly, she was running dangerously low on fresh literary material. Secondly, she had promised Ginny that she would meet her for dinner. Generally dinner with Ginny lasted longer than the average dinner with friends, which meant the rain would likely have abated by the time she was able to return.

Hermione resigned herself to the fact that she was going to have to leave the peace of her home. She dressed in some nice jeans and a gray long-sleeved shirt and Apparated to the Italian restaurant that was agreed upon earlier in the week. Ginny hadn't arrived yet so Hermione waited in the bar area with a small glass of red wine. About ten minutes later, Ginny finally arrived.

"I'm so sorry I'm late Hermione." Ginny breathlessly apologized. "I couldn't find my keys."

"It's fine. I hadn't been here very long."

The host led them to a small table toward the back and took Ginny's drink order. "So what's up?" Hermione asked once the waiter left.

And with that Ginny was off describing every detail of her job at Madame Malkin's, where she was interning, and the recent ups and downs of her relationship with Terry Boot. Hermione only had to offer the occasional response to Ginny's monologue and so did not pay consistent attention to the considerable number of details offered by the redhead. Instead Hermione thought about what new book she should get, what groceries she was low on, and what paperwork she had to do Monday at work.

This was the life of Hermione Granger. She had perfunctory meetings with people she knew from Hogwarts, performed her job at an exceptional level, and lived a life of few pleasures, but fewer pains. She welcomed this after the war. Some had become almost addicted to adrenalin once the fighting was done and began engaging in extreme behaviors to hit that feeling again. Hermione thought that they hadn't been tortured likely. Anyone who had wouldn't seek out pain. There were also those who had been so damaged that they either ended up in hospitals or as hermits. Hermione didn't count her among those either. After all she was here with Ginny, even if she didn't necessarily want to be. So Hermione found her life content, or at least not stymied in one of the extremes.

As their food came, Ginny wrapped up her extensive update. Hermione knew that the conversation was going to turn to the topic she least liked but everyone felt entitled to ask. "Now that I've updated you on what's going on with Terry and me, have you met anyone recently?" Ginny ventured.

"It's the same as it was the last time you asked me and the time before that and, shockingly, the time before that. I am not seeing anyone. I have no desire to see anyone. I spent seven years of my life caring about and for two boys and another year trying things with your brother. I think it's time for me to care about me. I don't know why

everyone expects me to constantly be courting and courted. I'm tired now. I'm tired of bad dreams and everyone's expectations. I don't have the energy or desire to take care of anyone else. I rarely got to spend time by myself growing up, and now I have my own flat, and it's nice to come home and not have to try and make conversation. It's nice to come home and get in my pajamas, have a glass of wine, and read. It's nice to come home and relax and not have to engage in meaningless drivel with someone who doesn't understand and whom I am using only as a warm body. I do not understand why it is so critical for me to have someone. It is not a sign of remaining damage, and it is not a sign of dissatisfaction with my life. It is only a sign of me not wanting to be in a relationship." Hermione concluded with a sip of her wine.

"Herm, I didn't mean anything by it. I just wanted to know if you had met anyone since we last talked."

"I'm sorry." Hermione sighed. "I guess I am not feeling well. I really didn't think I should come and I guess I was right. It's nothing against you. I'm just tired. I'll owl you later." Hermione put her portion of the bill on the table and left quickly.

She knew she shouldn't have blown up at Ginny. Ginny was one of the few who still maintained genuine interest in her life. She just wanted so badly to be back at her apartment listening to the rain. So that's where she went. She went home, changed into her pajamas, and slipped into her comfy and warm bed, and let the pitter-patter of the rain lull her to sleep. It was often only on rainy nights she slept well, and although she regretted her outburst, she was not going to let this night go by.

Beware Egomaniacal, Pissed-off Shakespeares

Chapter 2 of 2

Hermione Granger is happy with her life post-war. It is not terribly exciting, but she is content. A reemergence might begin to show Hermione how much she's missing out on.

Hermione woke, as she often did, with her head aching. It didn't help that the sun was streaming rudely through her bedroom window. She made her way wearily toward the kitchen almost stepping on poor Crookshanks' tail. Her first goal every morning was to start a pot of coffee. While her proper English self abhorred the idea of coffee, her practical self realized the intense usefulness of caffeine early in the morning. It was also extremely helpful in fighting off her daily headache.

She went through her morning routine as she usually did. Since nothing ever changed, she had no need for coherent thought and any moment Hermione could be autopiloted, she enjoyed.

Unfortunately, today was Tuesday, and so it meant that Hermione had to leave her lovely and comfortable flat. She dressed in a grey suit with silver accents and quickly braided her hair. She slipped into her low-heeled grey Mary Janes and fed Crookshanks before Apparating to work.

When Hermione finished her basic schooling, she could have worked anywhere. There were plenty of offers in the research sector. She could have gone to any university she wanted. The Ministry practically begged her to work for them. Instead, Hermione worked in a publishing house. She wasn't anyone who made decisions or dealt with press releases, but she was able to be in peace. She had had enough of the limelight. She had been practically slandered in *Witch Weekly* when she was 15. She was hounded by the papers after Voldemort's defeat. It seemed every glance she made meant that she was romantically involved with someone. Hermione understood that "saviors" were guaranteed to sell papers, but that can be a tiring life style for a Muggle-born bookworm.

Although her boss, Mr. Gaverty, would have loved to parade his vocational conquest in front of all the world, Hermione vowed to leave the agency the second her presence was required past normal business hours. When she chose her job, she insisted that her attendance was not to be required at release parties and she would have limited contact to the authors that her firm represented. Hermione went so far as to ask that a false name be put on her door and on any work that went out. All her job entailed was checking that there was a period at the end of every statement and a dot above every "i." This allowed the girl, who had grown to despise publicity, an ability to surround herself with literature every day. Despite this, she made certain to not bring her work home. She refused to edit in her flat. Any reading done there was purely for pleasure.

Hermione had an unassuming office with a dark mahogany door and matching desk upon which everything was as orderly as one would expect of Hermione Granger. The manuscript she was currently working on was usually centered on her desk with a red bookmark marking her place. Finished pieces were immediately returned to her boss, and those he sent back were placed in the upper center corner. Those waiting to be reviewed were placed at her lower left, and her extensive repertoire of tools were housed on her lower right. Everything had a specific place in which she rarely varied.

The house she worked for dealt mostly with novels, but also published academic journals, non-fiction books, and even a magazine, *Charming*, to diversify. Hermione was often assigned novels that were placed within the Muggle world, but, due to her reputation, was also assigned academic articles and any non-fiction book involving Harry Potter.

There was no doubt that Hermione's work was often the most thorough of all the junior editors, and this caused some animosity between she and her coworkers. The female ones tended to lust after Harry and disliked Hermione for her close relationship with him. Her male coworkers disliked her work ethic and the attention Mr. Gaverty was always paying Hermione. In other words, her job was vastly similar to Hogwarts. The difference was that this time Hermione sought solitude and was for the most part granted it.

Occasionally, authors would take offense to some change to a sentence that "disrupted the cosmic flow of the art." Mr. Gaverty tended to interact with Hermione's authors instead of directing them to her. This was due in part to Hermione's difficulty assuaging authors' fragile egos. This was also in part due to Gaverty not wanting to lose his talented editor. On the rare occasion that the author refused to interact with anyone but the person who dared to find their manuscript imperfect, Hermione won out.

When Hermione got to work on this day, she immediately started eviscerating a truly awful novel about a Muggle girl who was courted by a wizard suitor at her Muggle university. Hermione was quite sure the author in question had never actually been to a Muggle university and doubted the possibility that she had ever even met a Muggle.

Hermione was just finishing the eighth chapter and about to go to lunch when her phone rang.

"Hermione, I'm dreadfully sorry. Some tall fellow is storming his way to your office. He insisted to speak to, and I quote, 'the dunderhead who is obviously too simplistic to understand my work.'" Gaverty launched into his warning before Hermione was even able to say hello.

"So, what you're saying is that I should prepare myself for an egomaniacal, pissed-off Shakespeare." Hermione rubbed her temples as she prepared herself for the unearned lashing that was surely coming. "Thanks for the warning." Her headache hadn't completely abated. Due to their prevalence, Hermione was hesitant to use any spells or potions to help with their pain. Since the argument coming was likely to last a while, Hermione decided to perform a quick spell to ensure that she was able to think without her head throbbing.

Hermione had barely finished saying the words before her door burst open. "There was nothing wrong with my findings, you ignorant twit!" The voice snarled into the room before any body passed through her doorway.

"Professor Snape!"

"Miss Granger. I apologize I was looking for Rhenna Grimogee. I was unaware that you worked here. Can you point me to the imbecile's office?" Severus Snape was fuming and was having a difficult time standing still. As he awaited Hermione's response, he was pacing like a lion in a cage across Hermione's tiny office.

"You've found her. 'Hermione Granger' tends to draw unwanted attention to my work." Hermione explained tiredly, standing from her desk. "Please have a seat. I don't recall reviewing anything written by you. Perhaps you can explain what you are doing barging into my office and berating my work." The shock at seeing her old Potions master stomping into her office was wearing off Hermione, and the irritation was setting in.

"I use a pseudonym in my academic work since my name actually causes unpleasanties and can make it especially difficult to get my work published. The article in question was written by Hadrian Alde. You said that my results were not strong enough to support my conclusions. The level of interaction between moon dew and antimony was more than enough for me to assert that they can be mixed effectively to heighten any transmutational effects." Snape begrudgingly sat in the single chair left for visitors.

"Professor, I will not be sneered at in my own office. I found that the results you reported were not strong enough to reach the conclusions you reported. There were confounding variables, such as the purity of the antimony, that were left unexplained, but could have affected your results. If you have further arguments, you may feel free to make an appointment with Mr. Gaverty. Now then, it is currently time for my lunch, which I prefer to take alone. Excuse me." With that Hermione left her office, leaving her former teacher to stew in her chair.

Severus Snape could be heard grumbling about arrogant students all the way back to Derek Gaverty's office.