

One Day, One Room

by chivalric

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One shot story

Chapter 1 of 1

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A/N: Many thanks to pyjamapants for betaing!

It was a lovely, warm day in early summer three years after the final battle and the defeat of Tom Riddle, better known as Lord Voldemort. The obligatory birds were singing in front of the high window of the small hotel in the middle of nowhere, a hotel on the countryside where no one knew Severus Snape and where no one knew Hermione Weasley.

Naturally, there was a soft wind blowing. Little, white, fluffy clouds chased each other across the deep, blue sky, the fragrance of roses hung in the air. It was a day made for lovers, and of course there were two lovers, deep in conversation, residing in one of the hotel rooms.

The man and the woman had come here early in the morning, as always. They were regular guests in the hotel, and the owner knew that the two of them were not married. It was obvious that they were very much in love with each other, although there was a considerable gap in the age between her and him. "Doesn't matter, deary," the owner would always say to his wife, who was the hotel's cook. "If it works for them, who am I to judge?" And his wife would always cast him a sour look, disapproving of his opinion, as well as at the couple.

The woman was so young and looked so innocent. Her long, curly brown hair was often hanging open all over her back, and her huge amber eyes were quick and took in even the smallest difference that had occurred since her last visit. She was not tall, reaching to her lover's shoulders at the most, and she laughed often and smiled at him even when he didn't look.

He, on the other hand, could have been her father. He must have been in his forties, and he was tall and lean, with long, black hair, which he often wore in a ponytail at the nape of his neck. His eyes were equally black, piercing and terrifying, his skin pale, his lips thin. Even his clothes were black; only sometimes could he be seen in jeans, but only when they went out for a long walk along the cliffs.

He didn't laugh and smiled seldom. His voice was deep: a wonderful, slightly rough voice that reminded the cook of velvet worn on naked skin. It made the cook shiver, that voice, although she would have never admitted it, neither to her husband nor to herself. "He's far too old for the girl," she would say to the kitchen maid, who was her niece. "Too old and too grumbly I haven't got a clue what she sees in him."

Whatever it was, they came to the hotel regularly and stayed for the day. Never for the night they always left before eight in the evening, but they always ate together before they left. And when she smiled at him and took his hand in hers, he smiled back and placed a kiss in her palm. At those moments, when his face was for once open and unguarded, he looked happy.

The hotel itself was small; so were its rooms. But they were nicely furnished, and the guests appreciated that the owner didn't bother them. He never asked for a license to prove the names of his guests. Those two, for example, the dark man and the beautiful woman, always signed with Mr and Mrs John and Jane Smith although it was most

obvious that those weren't their real names. He called her Hermione, and she now and then said his name Severus with so much affection in her voice that the cook really couldn't understand why the two weren't married to each other.

Because it was most obvious that at least the woman was married. On her ring finger was a faint mark that indicated she usually wore a ring on that hand, and it was always her who finally looked at the big clock in the dining room. This look marked the moment when they would get up, pay, and leave. Until the next time, a few weeks, sometimes a month later.

They were lying together on the big bed in the small room with the window that went west. The sun was yet high in the sky, and the birds were still singing, but the man and his woman were oblivious to it. Their bodies were entangled, clinging together after their lovemaking as if they just couldn't let go of each other. The need to touch each other, to hold each other, to feel each other's heartbeats was a necessity they saw each other far too rarely. Those days in the small hotel didn't happen often enough, so when they were here, together, they made love as if it would be for the last time.

The man he was a wizard, but neither the owner of the hotel nor the cook nor the kitchen maid knew about it lazily stroked the woman's back. Gently, he followed the curves of her body, starting at her delicate shoulders, went down her arm, across her ribs, and over her hip bone. Eventually, his hand would end up lying on her bum, kneading it gently, whilst his face was buried in her wild, unbelievably untamed hair. "I love you," he murmured, inhaling her fragrance and the mingled scents of their recent encounter.

"I know," she whispered and kissed his throat, felt his pulse under her demanding lips, and shuddered with the sudden rush of desire and passion that shook her body. *How can I love him so much and still stay married with Ron?* She thought with despair, but of course, the answer was easy. She loved Severus, but Ron was safe. And safety was the only thing that counted under the circumstances.

Voldemort was dead, but his Death Eaters weren't many had survived the final battle, and all of them knew that Snape had betrayed them. They were after him, they tried to kill him, and he lived in the constant fear that they would, sooner or later, find out that he was having an affair with Ronald Weasley's wife. More than once, Severus had tried to end it, had tried to persuade Hermione not to see him anymore without success. "I love you too much," she always said and kissed him so longingly that his reasoning just melted away. Because he loved her, too. More than anyone, more than anything, he loved this woman who once had been his student and who was married to the biggest dunderhead in history. In his opinion.

Absentmindedly, Severus traced runes across her ribcage, his head resting on her shoulder and her fingers entwined in his long, black hair. Her eyes were closed, and she tremendously enjoyed the tenderness that always followed their lovemaking. The gentle touch of his fingers on her skin, the slow, steady beat of his heart, his breath that caressed her, all made her feel complete and utterly, endlessly happy.

Severus painted the runes with deliberation. They were not empty patterns, but contained just the faintest magic, given the fact that he drew them with his fingertips and not his wand. *Love*, was the first rune, right across her heart, followed by *Passion* and *Future*. Then he stopped, circled her belly button, halted as if thinking, then added *Safety* from hip bone to hip bone.

Hermione stiffened under his touch, and he was startled by her reaction. It was a ritual, him touching and caressing her afterwards, and he knew she enjoyed it. Actually, he was usually able to bring her close to purring with his touch, ever so often seducing her with nothing but his fingertips into more kisses and more lovemaking.

But now, she was clearly uncomfortable, and he sat up, gave her some space to breathe and to tell him what was wrong.

She sat up, swung her legs out of the bed, and hung her head. Her hands were cramped into the sheets, and Severus could see her shoulders tremble only so slightly in the warm, golden light of the afternoon sun.

Cold fear washed over the Potions master, and he moved another inch away from her despite his urge to touch her, to wrap her into his strong arms, to hold her close. To hold her back.

He knew what she was about to say, knew it with absolute certainty, and although he had ever so often tried to push her away from him for her own safety, he now felt devastation wash over him at the knowledge that she was doing it. That she was ending their affair.

"I am pregnant."

Only a faint whisper in the quiet room. Just three little words, and still, they changed everything. Severus thought, for a brief moment, that he would pass out, that his heart would surely stop beating.

That he would strangle her.

Then he saw a tear falling from her cheek, and he just got up instead and started to get dressed. "I suppose Weasley is delighted," he commented dryly. "One more redhead; truly, I would have thought there are enough of those in the world. Hopefully, the child will have your brains at least." Fastening his belt, he took his shirt and put it on, buttoning it mechanically. He could smell her in his garments, her fragrance, as he had held her close so very often today, had kissed her whilst wearing the shirt. Well, the fragrance wouldn't survive the next wash.

Finally, she managed to look up at him. Her eyes were huge in her pale face, tears welling in them. She made no attempt to wipe them off. She just stared at him. "I have to stay with him," she whispered. "For the sake of my child, I have to stay with him. You know that. As long as Voldemort's remaining Inner Circle is hunting you, I must stay away from you."

"You didn't stay away from me until today," he said, his voice harsh and cold. "That I was a target didn't bother you in the past three years."

For a moment it seemed as if she would leap up, as if she would launch herself into his arms. But the moment passed and she remained seated. "I wasn't pregnant, then."

Severus nodded once, looked around the room to check if all his belongings were with him, and turned to leave. At the door, he stopped. Without looking back he said, "Have a nice life, Hermione," before silently closing the door behind him.

Numb with pain and loss, Hermione Weasley stared at the door. She was still naked, of course, and the runes her one and only love had painted on her skin were still tingling mockingly. "It won't be a redhead, Severus." She cried, tear after tear dropping to the white, crumpled sheets. "It is yours, your child I'm carrying, but I have to stay with Ron so it will survive. You know that!"

Had the dark wizard stayed behind the door, had he lingered for only a few moments, he would have heard her. But he was already gone.

A/N: The title to this story is from House, M.D.

"I'm gonna base this moment on who I'm stuck in a room with. It's what life is. It's a series of rooms. And who we get stuck in those rooms with adds up to what our lives are."