

Polyjuice Paramour

by BellatrixLives

Severus has been disappearing every Thursday for the last two months, and when he returns he is moody and unresponsive. Hermione vows to discover where he is going and what he is doing.

His Personal Hell

Chapter 1 of 1

Severus has been disappearing every Thursday for the last two months, and when he returns he is moody and unresponsive. Hermione vows to discover where he is going and what he is doing.

Author's Note: Best parts aren't mine, and thanks to sempra for the beta.

* * *

I'm off to my meeting," he said.

"I know, love," she replied, voice tight.

She knew he was lying.

Every other Thursday for the last two months, Severus had told her he was going to a meeting of the Potion Master's Guild, a secret society of brewers that got together to discuss their research. Being a naturally curious person, Hermione was overflowing with questions when he returned home; unfortunately he would just brush her off and retreat to the study. For days afterwards he would be cold and distant.

Deciding to do a little research, Hermione was unable to find anything on the 'Potion Master's Guild.' Secret society or not, it should have at least been mentioned somewhere.

She had to find out what was going on.

* * *

She'd been following him for four weeks. The first week she hadn't been able to make it past the corner of Beaumont Road and Tunmarsh Lane for fear of what she already suspected. The second and third week, she'd tailed him to Green Gate but not followed him in. The fourth week she had finally managed to push aside the fear that paralyzed her and had followed him inside.

To the casual observer, Green Gate was an adult theatre, but in actuality, it housed a gateway to the Wizarding World's red light district. The theatre itself serviced both wizard and Muggles alike, making it one of a kind.

If only playing out perverse sexual fantasies could unite the rest of the world as well.

At the rear of the theatre was a door that claimed to lead to an alleyway, but it actually led out into an entire wizard community filled with brothels and seedy motels.

Stepping out onto the shadowed street wearing Harry's invisibility cloak, it took Hermione a moment to understand why all the escorts were wearing completely unattractive bathrobes and slippers.

The working women prowled the block wearing magical lingerie that changed shape in much the same way as a boggart, except instead of taking the form of the onlooker's worst fear, it took the form of their deepest desire. This made them stand out from the female deviants looking for a fix.

She took a deep breath and tried not to imagine what he saw when he looked at them. Scanning the area, she caught sight of Severus' imposing stature near three women: a blonde, a brunette, and a redhead.

I really wish this were the start of a joke.

He was leaning in towards the perky redhead, whispering in her ear.

The redhead giggled and took his arm, leading him to the dilapidated building advertising hourly rates behind them.

Swallowing the bile and anger that threatened to overtake her, Hermione hurried along after the pair, pushing her luck and rushing in through the door he held open for the redhead.

After paying a sleazy looking wizard for a two-hour stay, Severus offered his arm to the redhead and ascended the rickety stairs. Hermione matched her steps to theirs to avoid drawing attention to the creaking she was creating.

When they reached the room, Hermione just barely squeezed in behind the redhead before Severus entered and warded the door.

The room was disgusting. The walls were mostly covered in peeling wallpaper that seemed to be resisting a hastily cast Sticking Charm. The windows were hidden by thick black drapes that were shivering slightly, hinting at a Doxy infestation.

Hermione didn't even want to think about the bed. It sat half collapsed, covered in a hideous yellow comforter.

She backed into a corner, trying to stay out of the way while not touching anything.

Severus and the redhead were standing near the foot of the bed. She was running a finger down his chest, sliding it over his many buttons with a playful glint in her eye.

"So, what'll it be? Huh, sexy? Do you want me to magic your clothes away, or do you wanna watch me slowly finger your buttons?" the redhead purred.

Hermione's stomach clenched.

What was I thinking in coming here? I have to get out of here... I can't watch this.

Severus spoke, stopping Hermione mid-step.

"What I want," his velvety tone told her, "is for you to take your disgusting hands off of me."

He knocked her hand away and pushed her onto the bed. Quickly he withdrew his wand.

"Petrificus Totalus!"

The redhead fell back, stiff as a board, with a look of shock on her face. Severus turned away from the bed and walked over to an unstable desk. He pulled a large leather pouch from his robes. From inside the pouch he removed two items wrapped in cloth. He set them on the table.

Turning back to the girl, Severus began casting diagnostic spells on her followed by cleansing charms. After he appeared satisfied with the results, he stowed his wand and returned to the desk to unwrap the two items.

One was a hairbrush, the other was a clear flask filled with Polyjuice Potion.

He pulled a strand of hair from the brush and dropped it into the flask with nimble fingers. The potion bubbled and turned a pale yellow. Gently, Severus placed the flask back on the desk and rewrapped the brush.

Drawing his wand again, he returned to the redhead.

"Finite! Imperio!"

Hermione had wondered why Severus chose a streetwalker and a squalid motel rather than one of the upscale brothels on the other end of the block. Now she understood it was because the brothels were carefully controlled; the rooms came with safe guards to protect the girls that worked there. Any hint of an Unforgivable and security would break down the door and have the violator arrested.

Severus had sunk to his knees, wand still grasped tightly but hanging gracelessly at his side.

The redhead stood up and walked over to the dresser, feet moving sluggishly. She picked up the flask and downed it in one gulp.

Hermione watched with bated breath.

The girl's skin started to bubble and shift. She shot up two inches in height, her hair darkened to a more lustrous shade of red, and her eyes turned from brown to the most vivid of green.

Harry's eyes...

It was Lily Potter.

Hermione's hand shot up to cover her mouth and stifle a gasp.

"Severus," Lily said, breaking into a grin.

"L-Lily," he answered, voice choked.

Lily walked forward, elegant and undeniably beautiful. She stopped in front of Severus and placed a soft hand on his cheek.

"I saved him, Lily. I saved your son. I protected him just like I promised I would. Is it enough? Have I earned your forgiveness?" he whispered.

She smiled her stunning smile, then drew her hand back and slapped him across the face. Her features turned cruel, her grin mocking.

"Oh, why yes, Severus!" she trilled sarcastically. "You saved a boy who was destined to survive anyway! I'm still dead because of your betrayal, but by all means, why wouldn't I forgive you?"

"I'm so sorry."

"Sorry? You're sorry, Sev? Ha! If you were truly sorry, you wouldn't have survived the war. You would have died along with those poor people who should be standing here alive."

Lily ran a pointed nail along the outline of the mark her hand had made.

"I didn't want to," he whispered.

"Didn't want to what, Sev?"

"Live. I intended to die, but she saved me."

His voice was strained, sounding more vulnerable than Hermione had imagined possible. His eyes were glassy but held no tears. Severus' grip on his wand slackened, and the escort-turned-Lily regained some control of her actions.

She made a rush for the door.

"Imperio!"

Lily stopped, slowly turning around, and made her way to stand behind his hunched form. Still kneeling, his shoulders just reached her waist.

Lily bent forward and began rubbing his shoulders suggestively, slipping a hand down over his chest.

"Ah, yes. Your darling wife, coming to your aid mere moments after the final battle, calling Fawkes to help you because of your supposed loyalty to the man you murdered. You do know you don't deserve her, don't you?" she asked.

Severus nodded dejectedly.

"She is only with you out of pity. You know this, and yet selfishly you keep her bound to you. Why?" Lily asked.

She moved in front of him and slowly lowered herself to her knees so they were eye to eye. Lily grabbed his chin and asked again, "Why?"

"Because I love her," he answered brokenly.

"Tsk, ts, selfish boy." She started caressing his cheek once more. "You loved me, Sev, and look what happened. I died."

Lily grabbed a fistful of hair.

"You loved your mother, and she committed suicide. You loved Dumbledore, and you murdered him." She leaned in close, almost pressing her lips to his. "If you really love her, Sev, you'll set her free before you kill her too."

Severus let out a strangled cry and threw Lily away from him.

"Stupefy!"

She fell motionlessly to the floor.

Hermione stood, weak kneed, with both hands over her mouth and tears streaming down her face.

Oh, Severus!

He continued to kneel there, head bent down, until the escort returned to her original form. Sighing heavily, Severus stood up. He quickly revived the girl and then Obliviated her. She smiled at him dazedly as he gave her a handful of galleons.

"You were so good, baby," she told him as they left the room together.

As soon as the door closed, Hermione fell to the floor and began to sob openly.

I have to fix this.

Once she'd calmed down, Hermione made her way to a blackened fireplace on the far side of the motel room. Igniting it with her wand, she then threw a handful of Floo powder into the flames. She stepped in.

"Grimmauld Place!"

* * *

It has been two weeks since Hermione learned where Severus has been disappearing to. She had left the moldy motel room and gone straight to Harry.

He was one of the few people who had completely believed in Severus after the war. Harry, after seeing the memories given to him in the Shrieking Shack, had rushed to Severus' defense and made sure he was seen as the war hero he truly was. Others, like Ron, had been more skeptical.

Although, secretly, Hermione felt Ron's disbelief stemmed more from her decision to marry Severus rather than any lack of evidence that Severus was indeed Dumbledore's man. Ron had never truly forgiven her, but Harry had blessed their union wholeheartedly. Harry had even gone so far as to make a public statement in the Daily Prophet:

"I view the union of Hermione Granger and Severus Snape as a sign of hope... hope that life will continue on even after all of the hardships and losses we, the Wizarding community, have sustained. If these two, who were some of those closest to the heat of the battle, can move on, then so can the rest of us. May we wish them nothing but happiness for their, hopefully peaceful, life together."

Hermione had cried when she had read the article, and Severus had been so impressed that, while he did not become close friends with Harry, he did tolerate him... mostly.

It was natural that, after discovering the pain Severus still forced himself to endure, Hermione ran to Harry for help.

Quick to recover from stunned disbelief at her tale, Harry had immediately set to work helping her devise a plan.

Hermione was skeptical, at first, about what she had to do, but after a trip with Harry to the Forbidden Forest and three twists of a magical stone, she knew it was the right thing to do.

* * *

Hermione rushed down the stairs two at a time.

"Severus?" she questioned tentatively, scared of what she was about to do.

He was in his lab, cleaning up. He quickly swept up a handful of Boomslang skin and hid it from view.

Hermione's resolve grew stronger.

"I'm going to have dinner with Harry and Ginny tonight, since you have your m-meeting."

"Alright, send my regards."

She nodded at him and started up the stairs but stopped again almost immediately.

"Severus?"

"Hmm?" he questioned absently, not looking at her.

"I love you so much."

His head shot up.

"I love you too, Hermione."

She smiled sadly at him and rushed away. Once upstairs, she Apparated to an empty alley near Green Gate and pulled out a hand mirror. She quickly began transfiguring her features.

She made her eyes a bit further apart, her nose less upturned, her lips thicker and her hair into sleek light red curls.

Taking a deep breath, Hermione made her way to the theatre, running through the plan again on the way.

Once she stepped through the back door of the theatre, she removed her traveling cloak, revealing the magical lingerie she had ordered especially. When not being worn, it looked just like a plain white slip.

Hermione stuffed her cloak into her nifty, beaded bag, which tonight looked like a black clutch. She carefully positioned herself in the same place the redhead had been standing. She also cast a few subtle charms to keep other women away from her and to draw Severus' eyes to her.

She waited.

And she waited.

"Hullo there, Lass. How 'bout a toss?"

Hermione jumped. Behind her was an extremely scruffy and rather dirty man. He was eyeing her unapologetically with a thoroughly inappropriate look on his face. She looked down at herself and gasped. She was wearing a translucent, silver bra and a g-string. She shot him another look and he grinned at her, showcasing several missing teeth.

"You can't afford me," she told him, "now get out of here before I curse your bollocks off!"

"I love me a gal with sass."

Hermione withdrew her wand and aimed for his crotch. He stumbled back a step and put his hands up defensively.

"Go."

He went, quickly.

After casting another small charm to keep unwanted visitors away, she returned to waiting.

She had begun to fear he wouldn't show when she saw the door of Green Gate open. He billowed out confidently and, after a quick survey of the street, headed her way.

Hermione took a deep breath and began to pace back and forth, swinging her hips in a rather obscene manner. When he got close enough to see, she winked at him and looked down at her clothing. She was wearing Gryffindor robes.

"Why hello there, love. Can I help you this fine evening?" She stepped forward and twisted a lock of his soft hair around her finger.

Severus ran a gentle hand down her arm, sending shivers through her.

"Why, yes, I think you can."

They made their way into the same dirty building and ended up in the same musty motel room.

Standing at the foot of the bed, Hermione reached her arms up around his neck.

"What do you want?" she whispered in his ear.

"Not you."

He threw her on the bed and froze her in place just like he had the redhead. He walked away for a moment, presumably to prepare the potion. Hermione used that time to clear her mind and concentrate.

Severus came back, and after checking her health and cleansing her, he ended the spell that bound her.

"Imperio!"

Calm swept over Hermione and she heard a little voice telling her to go drink the potion.

Ok, she answered the voice.

Hermione quickly moved over to the desk and downed the yellow liquid. It tasted warm and slightly sweet. Her body morphed and changed rapidly, until she didn't feel like herself at all.

Come to me, the little voice whispered.

She started to listen to it and walked towards Severus who, once again, was kneeling. But then she caught a glimpse of herself in the mirror, and it wasn't really her, it was Lily.

Reminded of why she was there, Hermione became stronger and stopped walking.

Come, the voice urged.

"No," she told him.

His head shot up and looked at her.

"*Imperio!*" He brandished his wand at her.

"Sev, stop trying to control me. That's why we drifted apart in the first place."

His jaw dropped comically.

"You were such a hypocrite back then. Always complaining about my housemates and how they were bad influences, and yet you wouldn't listen to my worries about your 'friends.'"

"Lily?" Severus asked, shock and confusion playing across his face.

"What? I thought you were expecting me."

Hermione walked over to him and placed a gentle hand on his cheek.

"It's really me, Sev."

Severus reached up and placed his hand over hers.

"It's not possible," he whispered.

"Anything is possible with magic."

Severus pulled away from her touch and buried his face in his hands, shaking his head.

"Why now?" he asked. "Why, after so many years, do you come now?"

Hermione dropped to the floor in front of him and placed a hand on either of his shoulders.

"Because it was time for you to know."

"Know what?"

"That I forgive you."

His head shot up and his eyes bore into her. They were wild and desperate, begging to believe in her words.

"Why?"

"Because the debt you thought you owed me has been paid tenfold. You made a stupid mistake when you were young, and you spent the last twenty years of your life paying for it. It is time to move on."

"I should be dead, not you. Not Lupin, or Tonks, or Fred, or little Colin Creevey, it should be me!" he shouted.

"Damn it, Sev! Stop being so self-pitying and just be happy, for Merlin's sake! What's done is done and you can't change that. The world doesn't revolve around you; there was more at play in their demise than just your life choices."

Severus glared at her questioningly, but his gaze quickly softened.

"I missed you, Lily."

She sighed.

"I missed you too, Sev."

"You really forgive me?"

"Yes, I do, and it's time you forgave yourself. You deserve this new chance at life."

He sighed.

"But I don't deserve her."

"That's another thing, Sev. I've been watching you and what you've been making me tell you. Having me say that you don't deserve Hermione or that she is only with you out of pity is one of the most ridiculous things you've ever come up with. I can honestly tell you that Hermione loves you with all of her heart, and it is not out of pity."

She placed a hand on his heart.

"She loves you for who you truly are, in here. Something I mistakenly overlooked."

They were quiet for a long time. Finally Severus looked up at her, a single tear running down his cheek.

"Thank you," he breathed.

"No, thank you. Now go home to your wife, she misses you. I'll take care of the brush, Sev. I don't think you should hang onto it any longer."

He nodded.

"What about the girl?"

"She won't remember a thing."

Severus stood up and helped Lily-Hermione to her feet. He swept her up into a bone crunching hug; she hesitated only a second before returning it.

"Goodbye, Lily."

"Goodbye, Severus."

Slowly he released her and made his way to the motel room door, watching her the whole way.

He smiled at her, nodded, and walked out.

Hermione sank to the floor and let out a heavy sigh. Barely thirty seconds passed and she started to shift back into herself.

That was close.

Hermione summoned her bag and pulled out some more appropriate clothing. After she changed, she lit the fireplace and threw the brush in. After she was positive it was destroyed, she Flooed home.

She set herself up in their library with a book and hot cocoa just minutes before Severus arrived home.

"Hermione?" he called, banging through the front door.

"I'm in here!"

He rushed into the library and quickly over to her.

"What is i..."

Severus swept her from the chair and into his arms, cutting her off.

"I love you," he told her, pressing her hard against him.

"I love you too," she forced out, finding it hard to take a breath while locked in his arms.

"I know."

"What's gotten into to you?" she asked, a smirk on her face.

He pushed her out arm's length from him and smiled.

"Peace," he said, "at last."