

Some People Like Lectures

by blue artemis

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Chapter 1 of 1

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"It is just sad, Hermione. I wish I could do something for him."

"At least he isn't dead, Harry. Did he seem happy?"

"Well, yeah, but still, he doesn't use magic. Isn't that just wrong?"

"Tragic, mate. Just tragic."

"That is IT, Ronald. You keep telling me that you will grow up and we can get married. I was supposed to overlook all the War groupies, including those three children you say aren't yours, ginger hair and all. I was supposed to overlook the fact that I've walked into the living room at Grimmauld Place on three different occasions, and you were 'entertaining.' I never said anything because I didn't want to hurt your family, but really, you are an immature wanker who only thinks with his todger, and you still have the emotional depth of a teaspoon! I am NEVER going to marry you. If you were the last man on earth, I would become a lesbian!" Hermione stormed out of the Burrow past an open-mouthed Molly and Arthur.

Ron looked up from his sandwich. "Eh. She'll get over it."

Harry gave him a disgusted look, got up and walked out. "I'm sorry, Molly, Arthur, but he's not getting it. I'm going to make sure Hermione is all right. She really didn't want to let you down, but I never really thought that they would make a good couple. I don't think she's going to humor him anymore."

Arthur put his hand on Molly's shoulder comfortingly. "I understand, son. We were hoping, but we didn't know he had mistreated her like that."

Molly sobbed. "It's my fault. I told him to sow his oats early, so that he would be ready to settle down. I said if they were meant, she would wait for him. But I never meant for him to disrespect her so."

"Molly, if he took your words to mean that he could do as he pleased, then he really isn't much of a man, is he? At least when I couldn't settle down, I didn't leave Ginny hanging." Harry walked out to check on his best friend.

Molly turned on her son once Harry was out the door. "Ronald Bilius Weasley! How dare you treat that girl like that! She does not deserve to be treated like that. No woman does. I believe her when she says she won't have you. I thought all my children had grown into worthy people, but your friends are right, you are still a boy."

"Hmphf. If they were my friends, they would take my side. Hermione would wait for me. Harry would still be with Ginny. We would all be happy together."

"You truly do live in a dream world, son. You told us you left the Aurors to help George, when in reality, George helped you out when you washed out. You use your press

as one of the heroes of the war to get all the young women in your bed. Three children? Are they really Weasleys? Are you taking care of them in any way? Molly, love, I'm going to check the birth records tomorrow at the Ministry. If they are our grandchildren, we will have to see about taking care of them."

Ron stared at his parents with his mouth hanging open. All of his infantile dreams were slowly running down the drain.

"If those ARE your children, Ronald, we are going to have to make reparations to the families and take responsibility. And I mean YOU are going to take responsibility."

Ron turned very pale. His life was over.

"Hermione, are you OK?"

"No, Harry. I just had it. It was safe to think we were going to all be one big Weasley family, but I think the only one I could marry is married. I would never be happy with Ron. I could make it work, but here we are five years out of Hogwarts, and he has done nothing with himself other than procreate. He didn't finish Auror training, so he didn't take those accelerated NEWTs like you did. He didn't go back to school like I did, either. He has no schooling, no drive and..."

"And you could live with all that if he had respected you and hadn't been shagging his flavor of the week here in the living room, or getting them up the duff or just flat out expecting you to wait for him to grow up."

"Exactly. He didn't respect me. I deserve respect."

"Yes, you do, love. So, do you want to visit Snape with me?"

"Visit?"

"Yes, he said we could. Well, you and me. He didn't really want to see Ron."

Hermione laughed through her tears. "Yes, of course."

"Good, we will go tomorrow. You can see your work-parole in action."

"Work-parole? Snape was pardoned, especially with his wonky magic."

"You'll see." Harry smiled. He was pretty sure he had his Hermione back.

The next morning, Hermione came down dressed in a pair of old jeans, a comfy Irish fisherman's sweater, and dragonhide boots.

"Is this good, Harry?"

Harry looked at her carefully. "Yes, perfect. Those boots look Muggle enough to pass." He held his arm out to her. "Ready?"

Hermione took his arm. "Ready!"

Harry turned into his Apparition. He landed them softly in a grassy field next to a vineyard.

"Where are we, Harry?"

"You are in Italy, Miss Granger, near Tuscany. This is my small vineyard. The big companies here joke that I am basically making home-made wine, which is basically true. It is how I started, anyway."

"Professor Snape! You look well. I just wanted to apologize for leaving you there so long, but I thought you were dead, and then there was no portrait, and we ran..."

Severus Snape smiled, a small smile, but one nonetheless and reached over and placed his index finger on Hermione's lips. "Shush, Miss Granger. You did what you needed to do, what you were fated to do. The extraordinary thing was when you came back for me. Now, I am no one's professor anymore; just call me Severus. Would you like a tour?"

Harry and Hermione looked at each other then grinned. "Yes!"

"Well, as you can see behind you, that is my home. We will end there, so you can see it later; the elves will provide a good lunch. Let us go to the barn; it is where I started."

"Started, sir?"

"Yes, Miss Granger, started. And please, don't call me sir. I don't stand on ceremony here. I have a relatively simple life, and I like it."

"Very well, Severus. Please call me Hermione. I feel like a school girl when you do that, instead of my twenty-four years."

"As you wish, Hermione. What do you know of home wine-making?"

"Next to nothing. Is it interesting?"

"It is as delicate as the most difficult potions and as interesting as most science."

"Wonderful! What can you tell me?"

"For Mer-heaven's sake, Uncle Sev, I thought you were going to give them a tour, not a lecture?"

"Ah, Draco. You must learn one thing. When a lovely woman shows interest in your work, you tell her what she wants to know. You do not leave her hanging. It is just as well; you can give Mr. Potter the tour while I show Hermione around. I wouldn't want to bore you two."

Hermione beamed. Harry took one look at her face and decided he would brave dealing with Draco, rather than making his friend have to choose.

"That is fine, Severus. I will stay with Draco. And please, call me Harry. I keep expecting detention when you say Mr. Potter."

Severus made a little half-bow at Harry and, placing his hand at the small of Hermione's back, turned her toward the barn, where his business had made its start.

"Good show, Potter. I haven't seen him that animated since he got his expensive crusher/de-stemmer in."

"Call me Harry, would you?"

"What would the Weasel think?"

"He'd think I was a bloody traitor, but considering what he's done, I really don't care. Hermione is my family, and the rest can go hang themselves. Good friends don't make you pick sides."

"Well said, Harry." Unexpectedly Draco put his hand out. "Hello, there. My name is Draco Malfoy. It is nice to meet you. Maybe we can be friends."

Harry smiled. "Hello, Draco. My name is Harry Potter. I think I would like that."

The two young men shook hands and walked toward the bottling cellar.

"I'm in the middle of checking the locks, Harry. Would you mind if we did that before continuing the tour?"

"Locks?"

"Yes, locks. They are stoppers that hold water, in order to keep the smaller batches of wine from oxidizing. Uncle Severus is very hands on, and we don't do things like a big winery. We do them more like a home wine-making enterprise. Therefore the bottles that are being aged are maintained with locks, and we need to make sure they are full of water and keeping the air out of the bottles."

"Sure, I don't mind helping. Just tell me what to do."

They went into the cellar and Draco showed him how to check the bottles to make sure they weren't turning brown and that the locks were full of water. If they were low, they added a bit, until Draco was satisfied.

"All right. We are done. What would you like to see next? There is still almost two hours until lunch time."

"Anything, everything. This is really wicked cool. And you will have to tell me how Severus gets along without his magic."

Draco smiled. "Who says he does without his magic?"

"What? But there has been no wand usage in almost three years. His last wand blew up spectacularly."

"True. But he will have to tell you himself, maybe at lunch, maybe some other day. I won't be the one giving up his secrets. He put himself out to petition my work-parole to be here."

"You don't seem to mind the work."

"No. Like potions, it is nice to see careful work turn into spectacular results. And I like wine."

Harry smiled at Draco, one of those unguarded smiles that made his face light up. Draco looked at him shyly after that smile. He wasn't used to being the recipient of one. He took him to see the animal barn, thinking that might distract him.

Hermione was surprised by the hand on her back, more so by the demeanor of the man attached to the hand.

"Severus, is Draco doing his work-parole here?"

"Yes, he is. He has been doing wonderfully, better than I thought with his limited magic. He seems to enjoy the hard work, but I believe it is because there is a result he can see, taste and touch. And it is as difficult as most potions, so he feels that he is keeping in practice. He is determined to combine this process with some of the magical ones at the Malfoy vineyards in France and see what he can do, once his parole is over."

"That is brilliant. How are you doing, now that you can't use your magic?" Hermione looked horrified at her blunt question. What she was not expecting was Severus' reaction.

Severus looked at the witch to see if she was genuinely curious or had some other purpose. Sensing nothing other than her own innate curiosity, he gave in to his first impulse. He laughed.

"Oh, my dear, you are the first and only person to see me from my old life who has the courage to ask me that straight out. Most of them hem and haw and dither and never get the answer they want. It is true that Nagini's venom damaged my magic, but only in the sense that I am no longer able to channel it through a wand. I find myself drawn to the old magics, those that draw from the earth. You realize I have twenty-three different varieties of grapes here? Only three of them are local. I've convinced the earth to cultivate them generously through my magic. It seems to appreciate the fact that I keep a small acreage for my basic needs. We have cows, sheep and goats for their milk and meat, some pigs and lots of vegetables. We even have an olive grove. I have found far more peace here than ever. Did you know that the Unforgiveables were bastardizations of old Druid farming spells? You could convince an animal to come peacefully, then slaughter it without pain. I use them now, and they seem to be a balm on my soul, instead of the horror it once was to do anything. I've regained control over my magic, but it is too powerful for a wand. I need a staff, which I've carved myself out of one of the olive trees and some of the older vines. I may show it to you at some point. I am teaching Draco some of this magic, as it is useful in the wine-making process."

"How is that, Severus? I wouldn't think that you could use this earth magic in the process of making wine."

"Well, not as the big wineries do, my dear, but in a home wine-making capacity, then yes, the magic is very useful."

"Oh, please, do tell me."

"As you wish. There are four basic ways to make wine at home. One is fruit wine, such as peach or blackberry. These are made by crushing the fruit, then as necessary, adding water, sugar and even maybe grape juice to get the flavors correct. You add yeast, and then ferment the result, getting a flavorful wine. This is basic and done in places like Britain, where it is far too cold to cultivate grapes. Same with making wine from concentrate. To concentrate, you would add acid."

Hermione was following his lecture with wide-eyes. She hadn't known there was this much variety in what one could do at home. She had images of peasants stomping grapes in barrels, as well as the programs on the television that showed the huge machinery of the large French wineries. She wasn't thinking of science and small scale experimenting.

"But the most fun is making wine from grapes. Now, almost all grape juice is clear. Red grapes give clear juice. How do you think the color is added for a red wine?"

Hermione looked at him thoughtfully. "From the skins, maybe?"

"Exactly! It is nice to see that you can apply knowledge and not just read from a book. Yes, yes, I know you have done so quite a bit, but usually not in my presence."

Hermione just beamed at him. He complimented her on her knowledge, even if it was a bit backhanded, and he had called her lovely earlier. This small hour of her life was more fulfilling than most weeks with Ron.

"What is that all about, Hermione?"

"All what?"

"The beaming. Luckily it isn't twinkling, or I would think you got into Albus's stash of doctored Lemon Drops."

Hermione laughed delightedly. "No, not at all. But you called me lovely earlier, and now you have complimented my store of knowledge. I haven't had a day like that in, well, ever."

Severus smiled at her. "Do you wish me to continue?"

"Yes, please."

"Very well. Now, the first press of juice is called free run. That is the juice that just comes off the grapes at their first crushing. That can be done on a nice piece of machinery like my crusher/de-stemmer, or just through a wringer. Once you have run the fruit through a wringer, you can pick the stems out by hand, which is why the crusher/de-stemmer is a nice addition to the machinery.

"Now, after that, you run what is left through a press, either a screw press, which is cheaper, or a nice bladder press, which is kinder to the grapes. A bladder press is a basket with an insert that blows up, like a bladder, and presses the grapes against the side. Now, that is used mostly by small wineries instead of home wine-makers, but it was the first piece of equipment I added when I expanded.

"No matter what you do to the wine, some of the stems will remain, and they add some bitterness, but they also add tannins and other things that are beneficial. That depends on the grape, and it is one of the reason wizarding wines never taste as good, because wizarding vintners tend to vanish all the stems, which ruins the flavor. Some of it is necessary.

"After the free run, which is the first press, you have light press, medium press and hard press. Hard press is very difficult to get without large machinery, which is good, because that becomes difficult to work with.

"Most home wine-makers will mix their press juice with their free run to get the right blend of flavors, a nice balance, if you will.

"Some of the crush will be allowed to sit on the skins longer to get more color and flavor, white grapes have yellowish skin, which adds to the color, for example, muscat grapes are hard to get juice out of but get a delightful flavor when left to sit on the skins. Also, there are fermenting agents on the skins of grapes."

While Severus was talking, he was walking Hermione through the vines, the barn where he started, and the grounds. She was listening intently, but enjoying the view of the beautiful vineyard/farm. She was even more delighted to see Harry and Draco having fun chasing some goat kids that had gotten loose.

"They are like little boys, aren't they?" Severus noted when he saw where she was looking.

"Very much so, but at least they can be adults. It looks like they decided to set past animosity aside. Now, I have a question. How do you decide what a good balance is?"

"Very good. That takes talent and trial and error. Once you have your balanced juice, you put it into bottles or barrels, and you usually add sulfur dioxide, in tablet or powder form. It is a way to control which type of yeasts you have. Some of the wild ones cannot live in that form. It also keeps the wine, especially a white, from oxidizing. Some home-winemakers like to let the wine brown a bit, because when the bits settle out, the wine is less likely to oxidize again. Now, you do add yeasts, specific ones for specific flavors. Again, it is a bit of science and a bit of talent. Sometimes, it is even a bit of luck, but most of these forms are quite well documented. White wines ferment cold or cool, in bottles with locks on top that are kept filled with water. Once the wine has reached the correct amount of sugar or alcoholic content, usually in measurements of brix, four to eight being appropriate, you can rack off the solids, then bottle it so it can age."

Hermione looked at him questioningly. "Rack?"

"Yes, you use a device sort of like a lipped cup at the end of a tube that keeps the solids, the stuff that has formed in the fermenting juice, out when you move it from the fermenting container to the bottle."

"Ah, makes sense. Go on, please."

Severus was pleased with her enthusiasm. "Now, for red wines, you always let the juice sit on the skins. You try to get it to the correct color and fermentation that way. You can add the sulfur dioxide here, again for oxidation, but mostly to keep the wild yeasts under control. Once you have the color and fermentation you would like, the process is pretty much the same as the white wine from that point on."

"People really do this at home?"

"Oh, yes. In barns, in basements, in back yards, it is a delicate but very rewarding enterprise. Mine grew, so that I am now a small specialty winery, due to my magic and the soil. Most Muggles just think I'm an eccentric scientist with a love for wine."

"It seems like a wonderful combination of both magic and science. I would love to learn your earth magic."

"You are more than welcome to stay, Hermione. I do have lessons with Draco three days a week that you can join, and instead of payment for the lessons, you can help him with his studies; once his parole is over, he is eligible to take his NEWTs. With you here, if you are willing to tutor him, we will have a good reason for him to be able to use his wand, even if it is limited, and under supervision."

"I would love that, Severus."

Harry saw the immediate change in Hermione's demeanor when she and Severus returned for lunch. Draco saw the change in Severus's demeanor. He looked, dare he say, hopeful.

"Draco, Hermione has agreed to stay and be your tutor in exchange for earth magic lessons."

Draco looked at Hermione in astonishment. "Really?"

"Yes, really."

Harry laughed when Draco went flying around the table and tackled Hermione in an excited hug.

"For heaven's sake, Draco Abraxas Malfoy, you do not tackle our guests!"

"I can tackle my friends, though, right?"

Severus just shook his head at him.

Six Months Later

"Damn it, Harry! I can't get them separated at all! They are always together!"

"Isn't that good?"

"Well, yes, but how am I supposed to tease them when all they do is smile at me?"

"Don't worry, love, don't you see Hermione alone for tutoring?"

"Well, yes, but if I try to tease her while she is teaching, I get hit with stinging hexes!"

Harry fell out of his seat laughing.

"Just you wait, Potter. No snogging for you."

"Draco..."

Two Years Later

Hermione and Severus married and their business was booming. She did special order potions and he had his wine. They occasionally dabbled in each other's specialty.

Draco and Harry became permanent fixtures at the winery. Draco did make his French winery one of the best in the wizarding world after his parole was over and his NEWTs were passed. Ginny was one of the matrons of honor at their bonding, Hermione was the other. Draco asked Ginny after she defended their choice to her brother at rather loud volume and with a nasty Bat-Bogey hex.

Ginny and Blaise were quite happy together in a villa not too far from the Snapes.

As for Ron, well, he and his three children lived off of the good-will of his family, although he did have to work hard for George. He did think up some of their newer products, but he was never allowed to be part of the actual development after he blew the place up a few times.

Many thanks to my beta, Southern_Witch_69!

And many, many thanks to my husband, who lectured me for about three hours on how to make wine at home. He used to make wine in his mother's basement with help from his brother. I wonder what that will all taste like ten years after he stopped.

This was written as a bingo prize for tudorpot over on LJ.

Prompt: Home made wine