

Foam – A Frothy Tale

by Amita

A descent into Severus-Hermione.

Chapter 1 of 1

A descent into Severus-Hermione.

"You've been slaving over those cauldrons for months with hardly a break," said Minerva.

"Could you stir this one for me while I grind some beetle shells?" asked Severus. "And that's not true. You've been giving me dancing lessons almost every night."

"I'm not certain that counts as fun," said Minerva. "What is this mixture, anyway?"

"Remember what that colonial, Bernie the Frenchy, said about foam being proof the gods love us and want us to be happy?" asked Severus.

"That was Benjamin Franklin, and he said it about beer," said Minerva.

"Same difference," said Severus. "At any rate, I'm trying to brew the essence."

"Severus, there's all these small bubbles, and they're overflowing the cauldron."

"Success," said Severus. "Don't worry about the waste. I can refine the process later, and it only takes a small amount."

He caught some in a cup and downed it. "Dang. That was good. Will you try some?"

"I like my potions to be tested before I imbibe," said Minerva.

"I'm still standing," said Severus.

"Yes, and I'm glad you are," said Minerva. "The celebration ball starts in two hours. Don't be late."

"You're a schoolmarm to the core," said Severus to the departing figure.

Later that evening, Severus strode into the ballroom, admired the decorations, and noticed Hermione Granger. She looked indecisive – didn't know if she was still a celebrity or not, still an awkward bookworm, still not certain of her beauty.

"Miss Granger, what a delight to see you," said Severus. "I hope you save some dances for me."

She was too relieved at a normal and friendly greeting to register surprise at its origin. She smiled back.

"Tell me what you have been doing," suggested Severus.

She thought anyone would be confused and bored by her research efforts at her new position, but he happily asked about the things he didn't understand, and she was soon deep into a description of her efforts. After a while, they noticed the food was ready.

"We have a choice of steamed shrimp, which are ready, or kabobs, which we have to grill ourselves," said Hermione.

"Kabobs would better commemorate this event, don't you think?" asked Severus.

"They would?" asked Hermione.

"Of course," said Severus, picking up several for both of them and arranging them on the grate. "During the struggle, nothing was prepared for us. We were all in suspense that we would not strike or remove the bobs from the coals at the correct time."

"You have a point there," said Hermione.

The chunks of beef represent our lumps of courage, and they are spaced by slices of onion and green pepper that represent the seasoning of old campaigners bolstered by the fresh enthusiasm of youth," said Severus.

Hermione gave the matter careful thought. "This other rack must represent our dear hearts with the cherry tomatoes, our rise out of despair and nothingness with the mushrooms, and the rotundity of events with the squash."

She thought a bit. "But we're overlooking the most important element – the skewers that hold everything together and represent our steely determination."

She beamed at Severus as he placed several kabobs for her on a bed of rice. "Good choice."

After several dances, they were walking in the garden to enjoy the cool of the evening. But she was feeling pleasantly warm, and unwanted thoughts kept intruding. How nice it would be if her fiancé showed interest in her work and engaged in clever repartee. Actually, showing interest in her work and a little more interest in her would be nice.

She wondered if she should be pressing against Severus as she was, but decided to go with it. "A knut for your thoughts," she said.

"You might find them offensive," he said.

"Yes, if you're thinking about Potions instead of me," she said.

"I asked to be excused on the basis of your beauty," he replied. "It would unbalance the staunchest of souls."

She was thinking her fiancé was unbalanced only by the thought of their becoming a couple. She had put it down to his lack of emotional range.

"Really unbalanced?" she asked. "Even naughty?"

She wondered how she had managed to say that, but it felt good. Then it occurred to her that he could crush her by being offended.

But he leaned in and whispered, "Naughtier than you can imagine. Your company is undermining all my defenses. It's not fair of you."

"Naughty enough to want to hold me?" she asked.

"That's a beginning," he said, folding her in his arms.

She was thinking it was innocent flirtation with its innocence affirmed by its naturalness, very natural, very comfortable. No harm in pressing her breasts against him and weaving, especially when it felt so good, so wonderful. She wanted more. Her whole body was weaving. His hand was on her hip, gripping the soft roundness. Her arms were around his neck, her lips seeking his.

She broke away, flushed.

"I ... I need to check on something," she said.

She couldn't remember the last time her fiancé had held her. She thought it would be good if he did so now, and she could drop in at his flat before returning to the celebration, but when she arrived, he was gone. His grooming toiletries were out and his best clothes were not in his wardrobe. She had dark suspicions about who he was meeting.

She returned, thinking she had ruined the evening with Severus, thinking it was for the best that she had, thinking that she regretted it. She didn't know what to think. Or to feel. She decided to be distantly polite. That was safe. When she saw him across the room, she nodded and gave him a small smile. The smile he returned lit up her world.

She floated across the room into his life.

From a prompt by MuseAmusant: An overworked Snape creates a fizzy beverage with unexpected side effects.