

The Time Turing Elixir

by Reyem

An unexplainable obsession causes Hermione to risk all that she knows to try and save her formidable Potions master from his ill-doomed fate. Will her efforts destroy the future of the Wizarding world? WIP HG/SS w/HG/RW

The Silent Portrait

Chapter 1 of 1

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A/N: Hello, fellow Petulant readers. This is my second posting of this story. I have gotten rapid responses on fanfiction.net, so I'd like to share it with other avid readers. This story is a WIP, so even I don't know what happens next! Anyways, I appreciate any extra feedback, so reviews are always encouraged. Thanks a lot, and I hope you enjoy!

CHAPTER ONE: THE SILENT PORTRAIT

Hermione Granger was numb for the past few months. Constantly waiting for her own life to get back to normal (or as close to it as possible), she assumed that going back to school would break the numbness in her soul. Being a 'know-it-all,' she soon realized her assumptions were correct. However, she hoped the numbness would be replaced by something akin to happiness. Not frustration, sadness, and anxiety with a touch of anger.

She felt that she no longer belonged at Hogwarts, but nevertheless, Hermione continued to walk the path up to the school gates. At least they allowed her to travel by her own means. Her trunk had been magically shipped to the inside of the castle. Hermione felt her other bags slip from the clammy grip of her hands and stopped to adjust the weight to make it secure. She then realized her legs were shaking.

Get a grip, Hermione. It's not like you are some ruddy first year, she viciously thought.

True, she was used to the environment at Hogwarts. Perhaps too comfortable. It was almost as if she had a special entitlement to the grounds. She thought back at the numerous times she and her friends purposely broke school rules and narrowly escaped expulsion.

Dumbledore's Army. Three-headed dogs. Polyjuice Potion. Shrieking Shack and Time Turners... she shook her head, willing those past memories to subside. Her line of thoughts only continued to lead back to one particular thought.

Person, she reminded herself.

Sighing, she dropped her parcels in the Great Hall as soon as she arrived. She checked her watch, wondering what time Harry and her boyfriend would be arriving. She requested to travel alone.

But she then realized she'd been requesting that for some time now. No one needed a negative attitude to weigh them down.

It had been nearly three months since the fall of Voldemort in these very walls. She looked all around her, noting that any evidence of war, death, and destruction was far to come by. Everything was back to normal.

But some scars could never be erased.

Willing herself to ease her mind, Hermione made her way up the stairs to report to Headmistress McGonagall. Despite the younger woman's protests, McGonagall still deemed it necessary to make her Head Girl. Eventually, she grudgingly accepted the task presented to her for the next nine months.

"Professor, it wouldn't be fair to the students below me who tried their hardest to complete their studies. My chance for the position was last year, and I willingly chose not to be here. I cannot accept the title."

"Miss Granger, I could not think of a better woman to help me restore this school to order. Even though it may seem like things are running smoothly, you will discover that the damage done is worse for the wear. I urge you to reconsider."

She purposely arrived hours before the rest of the students got off the train. She wanted to avoid any type of crowd situation. However, at this very moment, she wished for some kind of distraction. Noises, talking, murmurs of spells being practiced. Anything to drone out the deafening silence of the corridors.

Usually, the quiet of the empty castle would comfort her. Today was an exception.

She whispered the password to the Headmistress's office, and climbed her way up the spiral steps.

"Miss Granger!" She was greeted by the older woman as soon as the door was open. "I didn't expect you would be arriving so soon."

Hermione set down her bag next to an empty chair. "Well, I wasn't too keen on travelling by train this year. I spent some time in Hogsmeade catching up on what I missed last year and just enjoyed the quietness."

McGonagall chuckled. "I see the Weasleys have been gracious to you."

Hermione smiled gently. "As always, Professor. Don't get me wrong. They are wonderful. But sometimes the noise is a bit unbearable. I can't hear myself think."

The teacher continued to smile and adjusted some papers on the desk. "Is Ronald waiting for you downstairs?"

Hermione shook her head and avoided the concerned gaze coming from the older woman at her response. "No. He'll be arriving with Ginny and Harry later on today."

McGonagall adjusted her glasses. "Miss Granger. It's understandable you are still facing some horrors from the past few months, but it is not healthy to be keeping it all bottled inside. Do you have anyone to speak to about this? Perhaps Potter, or your beau for that matter?"

She shook off her concern. "Do not worry, Professor. I'm dealing with issues, yes, but I'm moving along. Besides, Harry and Ron lost a lot of things too." She shifted in the chair, observing her clenched hands as if they were mildly interesting. "Ron was lucky enough to be distracted by helping out his brother with the joke shop after Fred died," she added swallowing hard, not wanting to think about the loss, "But he seems to be looking toward the future instead of dealing with the past. It's working for him. It should for me as well."

"I surely hope so. But you know you can talk to me at anytime." Her tone of voice was all too maternal. Hermione only managed to nod in response.

McGonagall stood up. "Let me fetch you some papers on these upcoming months. It's just about your duties as Head Girl and such. I think I left them in the other room. Be right back."

As she left the room, Hermione let out a long sigh. A year ago, she would have gladly wanted to be safe in the confines of the castle. But last year, Hogwarts was a horrific place to stay. Maybe in the long run, she was safer in the sporadic locations she and her friends Apparated to.

Nevertheless, after enduring all they did the past year, being back at Hogwarts seemed unimportant. But she understood that she could not advance any further into the Wizarding world without completing her education, and she would have to endure it.

Hermione took in her surroundings. Her heart ached as she realized how different the office appeared compared to Dumbledore's. The old man had trinkets and moving objects all around the room. A phoenix used to perch in the cage behind the desk. Now, the only thing that seemed consistent was the sword of Gryffindor mounted on the wall next to the stand where the beat up Sorting Hat rested.

Perhaps she just needs more time to decorate, Hermione mused, not liking the bareness of the walls, save for the sword and the numerous portraits of past Headmasters and Headmistresses of Hogwarts.

Her breath got caught in her throat. Past Headmasters? She turned her shoulder to observe the sleeping portraits. She couldn't help but smile at Dumbledore's, who was currently scratching his nose in his sleep. But continuing down the line, her eyes met the newest addition to the fold.

Except he wasn't sleeping. Nor was he looking at anything in particular. Severus Snape simply looked off in the distance, as if he did not want to make eye contact. His lank, dark hair framed the side of his face, covering most of it from view. Hermione would have thought it was a Muggle painting if she didn't see his locks drift slightly as he exhaled.

Hermione stood up from her chair to get a better look at her former Potions master's portrait. If he noticed her abrupt movement, he didn't reveal it, for he continued to look out in the distance.

"Professor Snape," she whispered.

She swore she saw him stiffen at the sound of her voice. But he didn't react beyond that. "Professor," she whispered again.

He must have recognized sorrow in her voice, because the next thing Snape did was turn his head to make eye contact with her. His black, endless orbs meeting her dark ones. They simply stared at one another, neither wanting to make the next move.

Being the brazen Gryffindor she was, Hermione slowly raised her hand and gently brushed the canvas on Snape's portrait. She could feel the tears stinging in her eyes, her breath catching in her throat as her fingertips ran across the uneven surface. All the anger she managed to close up inside her threatened to explode at this man's undoing.

Revelation dawned on her as she continued to tenderly stroke the canvas. The tears spilled down her face, and she fervently shook her head, not wanting what her conscious revealed to her to be true. But she couldn't take it anymore.

"Why did you have to die?" she choked. "You were murdered for no just reason. You didn't have to die!" She whispered the last statement over and over and over, slowly losing control of her emotions.

Snape simply closed his eyes and shook his head. In his Snape-ish way, the look he gave her stated he wanted none of her sympathy.

McGonagall reentered the room just as Hermione collapsed on the floor. She saw Snape get up from his chair and walk out of the portrait. The Headmistress sighed. More often than not, the man left the confines of the painting, and no one seemed to know where he ventured to.

More pressing matters were to be called upon. The young woman was sprawled on the floor, tears relentlessly falling down her face as she tried to gain control back. It was

obvious Hermione never got her emotions out about the war. This girl needed to talk to someone about the losses she faced.

McGonagall rushed to Hermione's side and knelt down to pull her into her maternal embrace. She hushed her like a mother would comfort her injured child. Hermione gripped the woman's outer robes as if it could rescue her from the horrors of her past. Slowly, after it felt like hours of crying on the older woman's shoulder, Hermione managed to gather her composure.

She pulled away, wiping her eyes with the handkerchief McGonagall gave her. "I apologize, Professor. I don't know what came over me."

McGonagall shook her head. "It's obvious that you haven't dealt with what happened properly, Miss Granger.

She stiffened in defense. "I'm fine, Professor. Just a moment of weakness. Everyone's entitled to them."

The Headmistress raised an eyebrow. "A moment of weakness? You call collapsing on the floor in a heap of tears and screams simply a 'moment'?"

Hermione stood up and hastily straightened her robes. "I just lived through a bloody war. Am I always supposed to react rationally after something like that? I don't think so. Don't press the issue any further than it has to."

McGonagall noted how Hermione averted her gaze from the opposite wall, and she turned to see the portrait frame Snape walked out of. He still was missing.

She sighed and stood up. "What did Professor Snape tell you?" she asked matter-of-factly.

Hermione, for the first time in her career at Hogwarts, was generally upset with her former Transfigurations teacher. "Minerva, he's dead. And right now, you are insulting his memory by accusing him of saying something to offend me. He's dealt with prejudice all his life. And you repay his sacrifice by assuming he insulted me?"

Hermione could swear she saw something shift in the empty portrait from the corner of her eye.

McGonagall pinched the bridge of her nose, trying to phrase her statements in a way without offending the younger witch. "Miss Granger, you and I both know Professor Snape wasn't the friendliest man in the school. He always had a sharp, dagger-like response that could make the coldest man flinch at the sound. You usually have your wits about you, so is it a crime for me to assume that he made you lose your temperament?"

Hermione simply shook her head and began to read over the papers the Headmistress handed to her. "If anything, Professor, he's the one who would remind me that there are greater things at stake than just the Boy Who Lived. Everyone had to play their part."

They both stood up. McGonagall sighed as she approached her desk and sat behind it. "Yes, I always seemed to be hard on the boy at school, and again while he began teaching. Perhaps I'm just a bit... frustrated and concerned that his portrait is nothing like his true self."

"Meaning what exactly, Professor?"

McGonagall glanced gently at the still empty painting. "Meaning, that in so far of my instatement as Headmistress, the only thing he has spoken to me about is how to permanently destroy his portrait."

Hermione's glance met the spot where McGonagall was gazing sympathetically. "It's just not fair, Professor."

"Miss Granger, nothing about the war was fair. So many innocent lives lost. It's a shame and a loss on everyone, but even magic cannot change what has happened. We must accept what we have and continue to prosper with the memories they left with us."

Hermione didn't want to have another emotional episode like before, so she quickly bid the professor goodbye. Before she left, however, the Headmistress spoke out again.

"Miss Granger, before I forget, the Ministry would like to have a word with you, Ronald, and Harry about some final ties with the war," McGonagall explained while reading over a letter. "Tomorrow evening at seven, here, if it wouldn't be a problem."

Hermione nodded while reaching for the doorknob. "Of course, Professor. And I will let the boys know as well." She quickly glanced over her shoulder, wishing she could get another glance at the portrait.

It was still empty.