

Hermione's Calling

by karelia

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Chapter 1 of 1

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Disclaimer: I own nothing but myself.

"Hermione, please! You cannot be serious!" Ron looked horrified. "That's... throwing your life away!"

"Please don't take any rash action," Harry pleaded.

Hermione sighed; she'd expected difficulty from her two best friends. "I'm not throwing my life away, Ron. Quite the opposite, since I've been wanting to go into Potions for years. I can't miss the opportunity to study with Snape!" She turned to Harry. "It's not like I've not been thinking about it."

"But you always loved Charms better," Harry said.

"No. But if I'd admitted I love Potions, I'd never have heard the end of it from you!"

100

"Hermione, wait!" Ginny had been silent throughout her discussion with the boys, but was now following her.

Hermione stopped.

"They'll come around," Ginny said. "And—" she grinned "—you don't have to hide it from me, you know? I've seen how you look at him, Hermione."

Hermione groaned. "It's that obvious?"

"Nobody'll notice. I just... noticed because after I heard the tales of your year on the run, I lost all confidence that Harry would ever love me." Ginny had the grace to blush. "I was actually quite relieved when I saw you look at someone as if you're in love."

200

Hermione did a double take when she opened the door.

"Look, Granger," Pansy said, her face a study of embarrassment, "I know I've been an arsehole to you, but I promise I'll be civil as long as you are."

Hermione stared at her. "Sorry. I was taken by surprise. Why don't you come in...?" She waved her inside.

Once both were seated, Hermione said, "So you are the *other* apprentice Professor Snape mentioned?"

"Yes. And he made it very clear that I need to make amends with you, so here I am."

Hermione smiled. It was the beginning of a friendship.

"Half way through apprenticeship. I think that deserves a pub crawl," Hermione said as she put the asphodel bottle back in its place on the shelf.

"Good idea," Pansy said. "Alone or in a crowd?"

"I should ask Harry and Ron to join," Hermione pondered. "They still think Snape has me for breakfast." *If only...*

Pansy sighed. "I would ask Draco, but then I'd have to put up with Astoria..." At Hermione's incredulous expression, she added, "I got over Draco long ago. We're good friends and nothing more. But that doesn't mean I have to like his choice of partner."

400

Hermione couldn't hide her grin as she watched Pansy and Ron engaged in conversation. Nothing else seemed to exist for those two.

"Do I detect a mutual interest here?" Harry whispered.

"I think you may... I've never seen her talk in such a lively way." Hermione shrugged. "Why not? Looks like they're getting on well enough, and they look nice together."

"No hard feelings?" Harry asked.

Hermione laughed. "No, Harry, none whatsoever. I will always love Ron, but I think we're both better off apart." Her eyes glinted. "Pansy loves Quidditch, did you know?"

"I'm impressed." Harry grinned at her.

"So, Granger," Pansy started as they sat down for lunch in a small sandwich bar, "when are you going to pounce on him? You have less than a month left, you know."

Hermione shrugged. "In nearly three years, he's never noticed I am a woman."

"Oh, he has. You are *not* giving up!"

"I'm not giving up insofar as I have no plans to look at any other man. But if he hasn't noticed by now that I fancy him, then I really don't know what to do, short of spelling it out for him."

"Perhaps you should..."

"No way."

600

"What are *you* doing here?" Snape sneered.

"Come to pick up my girlfriend. We have plans for the weekend," Ron said, ignoring his former teacher's demeanour.

Snape glared at him.

Hermione stepped into the office. "Hi, Ron. Pansy should be here in a minute. She's teaching first years."

The bell rang. "There. She won't be a minute."

Snape stared at Hermione, then turned abruptly and left.

Ron looked at her. "What was that about? You and Pansy said he's changed!"

"He *has* changed. I've not seen him like this in ages." Hermione shrugged.

Ron's attention was diverted by Pansy's arrival.

"I did it!" Pansy showed off her parchment that identified her as a Potions mistress. "Go in; don't let him wait," she urged. "I'll see you tomorrow night at the Leaky."

Hermione entered Snape's study on wobbly legs. *This is it...*

"Congratulations, Granger," Snape said and handed her a parchment that was the ticket to possibilities still unknown. Yet it meant little to her.

"Thank you, Professor," Hermione said, her voice foreign to her own ears. She stared at the parchment as if reading, but the words swam into wiggly shapes. *I won't see him again*, was her only thought.

800

He motioned for her to sit down and sat himself down behind his desk. "If you don't mind me asking, what are your plans?"

"Plans?" Hermione took a deep breath. "I don't really have any." Inwardly, she groaned. *Could I possibly sound more stupid...?*

"How many offers have you received?" he asked, incredulous.

"Oh." Hermione waved dismissively. "Perhaps twenty. But none of them seem right."

"Surely, not all of them were for teaching? There must be some that include research?" he prodded.

Hermione nodded miserably. *But I want to stay here. With you...*

"Perhaps," he started slowly, "stay at Hogwarts?"

900

Pansy waved from a table at the back when Hermione entered the pub. "You look decidedly happy, Granger. What happened?" She smirked.

"Is it that obvious?" Hermione sat down. "I have a job."

"I should hope so! You had how many offers?" Ron asked.

Pansy shook her head. "Nah. None were good enough."

"They were good enough. Just not what I wanted." Hermione sipped her butterbeer.

"And you got the job you wanted?" Pansy asked. "Yesterday? Perchance just after I left?"

Hermione nodded. "Exactly what I wanted." She took another sip. "I can't stay for long. I have a date."

Once seated at the table he'd booked, he took her hand in his, making her heart sing. "I won't pretend to understand why you chose me of all people to give your heart to, but I promise that I shall treasure it. You." Their eyes held through the silence that followed.

"I've treasured every minute I spent with you these past years, every tiny gesture that suggested you don't hate me, every time your hand brushed mine."

His hold on her hand tightened. "You know I never hated you. I thought, until recently, that you were with the Weasley boy."

1100

It took barely a week for Hermione to give up the pretence of independent witch.

"You may as well move here completely," Severus said. "Unless you need a separate space away from me."

"I don't. But what about you?" she asked, her heart flutter.

Severus took her in his arms. He would never tire of holding her, of exploring her, of *learning* her. "I just want to absorb you so you'll never be away from me," he murmured into her hair. "I never knew what I was missing in life until I found you."

"Severus," she breathed.

Life was beautiful.

1200

A/N: Loosely based on a prompt from linlawless: Someone thinks s/he has discovered their 'true calling'. Someone else has to tell them it's clearly not...

Meet Teaoli, who at very short notice beta-read this and left the right comments in all the right places, including some stern glares about my questionable use of punctuation. Thank her for improving this drabblathon. Blame me for mistakes.

Reviews are love, and love conquers all.