

Making Love

by TeddyRadiator

Everyone knows that Hermione Granger and Headmaster Severus Snape are perfect for one another – everyone, it seems, except Hermione and Severus. Ginny Weasley decided to take matters in her own hands with a box of enchanted chocolates and her own matchmaking skills. Written for the LJ HP_3ForFun community.

One

Chapter 1 of 2

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Thanks to my beautiful Beta stgulik for always buffing up my stories to a lovely shine. I always hoped for the best I got her.

Once upon a time I volunteered to pinch hit for the HP_3ForFun community. It was only when I was about halfway through this fic that I realised I was extremely jealous of any woman with Severus other than Hermione! A bit of a bother if the entire objective is to write a 3-way.

I cannot tell you if I succeeded or not. I'm not going to talk much about the reception it received, but I wanted to include it here as proof that once upon a time, I tried to write outside my comfort zone.

This particular Order reunion didn't bother her at all, so she must have finally gotten used to the situation. It certainly didn't upset her like the last couple of parties. She surmised she was finally over it; she could watch Harry and his betrothed without feeling either sick with humiliation or furious with betrayal.

Ginny Weasley sat off to the side of the room, silently observing the small band of brothers and sisters that had come together for what she thought (hoped!) might be the last of these little reunions. Now that Wizarding Britain had settled back into its routine, and five long and tough years had passed since Harry Potter had defeated Tom Riddle, the Order had become a bit of a relic, surplus to requirements. Ginny knew she was not alone in thinking it was time to formally disband. It had served its purpose and fulfilled its remit; besides, it always reminded Ginny too much of who was no longer there.

The various Order members tended to clump up in groups, and tonight was no exception. She saw her former professors sitting off to one side, chatting away with her parents. Minister Shacklebolt always got saddled with Percy, who, in spite of everything, could still kiss arse with the best of them. Her older brothers and their families always sat at the far end to make room for their children. Her brother George tended to sit with her, and together they lifted their drinks in silent toast to Fred, Tonks and Lupin - gone, but not forgotten. They always saw to that.

Over in the corner, as had become their habit over the past three years, Hermione Granger sat with the newly-reinstated Headmaster of Hogwarts, Severus Snape. They were talking earnestly, the rising and falling cadence of their voices soft, yet intense. Both of them were creatures capable of great concentration, and when they started a conversation, they zeroed in on one another like two Seekers with a bead on the same Snitch.

It was almost impossible to get a word in edgewise with them once they took off on one of their many heated debates and discussions. Ginny smiled. Aside from George, they were her two favourite people in the room. She looked on with affectionate exasperation, and as always, her mind turned to those dark days near the end of the war.

Ginny thought back to her sixth year, when Harry, Ron and Hermione went on the run - when Snape first became the despised Headmaster of the hell that had been Hogwarts. She had hated and fought him with every fibre of her being, until she realised it was exactly what she was supposed to do. In the midst of the fear and turmoil and stolen chances, Ginny suddenly realised that Snape was doing a very good job of pretending to loathe her and Neville and all the others in Dumbledore's Army; she figured out Snape could have done terrible things to entice her to confess what was really going on, but he didn't. Instead, he exercised every option available to protect them from the Carrows and their ilk while making it look as if he were turning the school into a concentration camp.

At first, nothing about Severus Snape had added up for Ginny; he had been glacial, yet passionate, aloof yet protective, unfeeling, yet solicitous. But an incident near the end of the war had served to show Snape's true nature to Ginny.

One night, Amicus Carrow had caught her sneaking food to some of the D.A. in hiding, and in spite of Ginny's insistent reminder that all punishment had to be approved by the Headmaster, Carrow had shoved her into an empty classroom, where he forced her over a desk, pulled down her knickers and proceeded to cane her with a birch rod.

"Cry, blood traitor," he'd sneered lecherously, and in spite of her resolve and determination not to, after five searing blows, Ginny was weeping in pain and humiliation.

She heard the sixth blow sing through the air, only to stop before it reached her blistered backside. In his unmistakable drawl, Headmaster Snape asked, "What is the meaning of this, Amicus?"

Winded and peeved he'd been thwarted, the fat toad of a Death Eater sneered, "This little blood traitor bitch was being openly defiant against school rules. I was administering punishment."

"I have told you and your sister more than once: all disciplining is to go through my office. If Miss Weasley has broken any school rules-"

"If? I just told you, Snape," Carrow whined. "She was out past curfew and sneaking food somewhere."

The Headmaster was silent, and Ginny tried to calm her breathing as she heard his boots clicking on the stone floor and he came within her view. "Please dress yourself, Miss Weasley. It is inappropriate to be in such a state in front of your male professors."

Anger and degradation flooded Ginny's heart. She straightened and quickly pulled her knickers back over her bottom, hissing in pain as she made contact with the bruised flesh. She glanced up at him, and saw Snape pointedly looking away from her. At first, she was even more furious, until she realised he was trying to give her some dignity. She wiped her tears away.

Snape plucked the rod from Carrow's pudgy fingers. "I will remain and administer the remainder of Miss Weasley's disciplining, Amicus. Meanwhile, it's getting late." Something like a feral grin passed over Snape's face. "No doubt your dear sister is wondering where you've gone. I shudder to think how she would react to finding you in a dark classroom with a half-dressed student."

Ginny glanced from Snape to Carrow, and in that instant she understood: Snape despised the Carrows as much as she did. With a grumble, Carrow left them, stumping off down the hall.

Snape waited until his footsteps died away before turning to Ginny. He vanished the rod with a snap and then looked her over carefully. In a voice that sounded almost drunk with fatigue, Snape said, "Miss Weasley, you are not helping your cause with this flagrant rule-breaking. Why were you out after curfew?"

Quietly, Ginny answered, "Does it matter, sir? I obviously am, so please just give me my punishment so I can go to bed."

"Professor Carrow mentioned food."

"I was hungry."

"I see," he replied, unsmiling. "And are you still... hungry?"

Ginny blinked. "Yes, sir."

Snape sighed, and pinched the bridge of his nose. "Winky!"

With a *POP!* the diminutive elf appeared. "Is the Headmaster needing anything, sir?" she squeaked, looking up at him with adoring eyes. Her adulation seemed to displease the Headmaster.

"Winky, Miss Weasley is hungry." He looked at Ginny solemnly, and she understood, or rather, she thought she did. "Bring her as much as she asks for." He turned to go. "You will serve detention tomorrow night, Miss Weasley. And you will not mention this incident to any of your little friends, is that understood?"

Tightly, Ginny said, "Yes, sir." He paused at the door. "Do you require..." he paused delicately, "...any healing salve for your punishment?"

Ginny bit back a sudden urge to laugh. It was all so absurd, standing in this room, saying things that meant nothing and expressing everything with their silence. "I have some, sir. Thank you."

He nodded curtly and swept silently from the room. The next night, she served detention with Hagrid, who told her in confidence much later that Snape had instructed him to work her hard, but to make sure she stayed safe and well-rested.

Less than a week later, it would all be over: Voldemort, the Carrows, were no more. Ginny, sitting with her family, weeping over Fred, was informed that the Headmaster had also been killed. She remembered feeling sorry for him, and wondered if he'd died well. He certainly deserved to. Had Hermione not gone to retrieve his body, only to find him clinging to life, Ginny knew that Snape would have died thinking himself the most despised man in Wizarding Britain.

Now, as Ginny sat nursing her butterbeer, her eyes turned from Snape and Hermione to her former boyfriend, and she allowed herself a smile. There had been a lot of changes in the years since that awful night, and some had been harder to swallow than others. But the top of *that* particular list was coming home early to the Burrow one evening, to find her brother Ron in a passionate, sexual embrace with the boy she loved Harry Potter.

Turning quickly from the bedroom door, with the picture indelibly etched in her brain of Harry crouched over her brother's lap, sucking his erect cock, Ginny had raced down the stairs, grabbed a broom, and was in the sky before the tears started to fall. Harry was in the air seconds behind her, calling her. He chased her until he grabbed the handle of her broom and forced her to land.

Once on the ground, they stood and looked at one another warily. "Ginny," Harry began, and she thought hysterically, *You'd better be very careful about the next words that come out of your mouth, Harry Potter.*

He swallowed. "Ginny, I'm not going to insult you by trying to pretend you didn't see what you saw in there." He sighed and sat down, plucking blades of grass and tossing them away absently. "We that is, last year, when the three of us went on the run, well, Ron and I began to realize we felt - felt more than"

"Did Hermione know?" Ginny said through clenched teeth. She couldn't help herself. "Did she ever join in with you?"

His silence told her everything she needed to know. Finally Harry said, "Just the once." He dropped his head. "I know it's no excuse, but we were so desperate and scared

and for just a moment, it made us feel safe again. We didn't really know what we were doing, any of us. It just helped us all forget for a moment that we -" He stopped, and closed his eyes. "Hermione realised she was..." He slumped. "Ron and I became lovers. Hermione turned a blind eye. She accepted it."

"I would have accepted it, too," Ginny said, suddenly feeling like a fool. All the minute signs had been there. She just hadn't known what she was looking for. Hermione's quiet sadness after the final battle. Her insistence on retrieving her Obliviated parents alone, without anyone's help, and her polite but firm distance upon her return.

Rather breezily, she asked, "Were you planning on telling me before or after we announced our engagement next month?"

"I've been wanting to tell you, Ginny, but, fuck, how could I?" His voice sounded plaintive, not at all like the hero of the Wizarding world. "I never saw myself as gay. I love you!"

Ginny nodded, wiping away her tears. "Just not the way you love Ron."

Harry hesitated, then nodded. "We never wanted to hurt you. I want you to believe that. We were going to tell your family tonight, after dinner." He looked away. "I'm sorry you had to find out this way."

Ginny sighed. "Me, too." Somewhere within, she dug deep for courage, and she found it, sitting closer to the surface than she had expected. That year apart from him had taught her more about herself than she realised. "But now that I have, you don't have to worry. I'm not going to make a scene. C'mon." She reached for his hand. "We need to call a family conference. You and Ron are going to have to come clean and let everyone know. Today. Before dinner." She looked up at him uncompromisingly. "And you're going to go public. I'm not going to have everyone saying what a fool I was to break up with the great Harry Potter."

Five years on, Ginny had long forgiven Harry and Ron. If anything, she found she could somewhat sympathise with them nowadays, having had a little first-hand experience with same-sex relationships herself. She no longer resented Hermione for keeping the secret from her, nor hated Severus Snape for being who he had to be in order to keep her safe.

In her world, Ginny was now a star in her own right a Seeker for the Holyhead Harpies, and a damn good one. She traveled as an ambassador for the sport, and she met all sorts of interesting people. Sometimes, looking at Harry and Ron struggling to come to grips with their relationship and their sexuality, or looking at Hermione and Snape doing this futile little dance around one another, Ginny felt older and more mature than the lot of them. At least she knew what she wanted and how to enjoy it when she got it.

She smiled again to see Severus and Hermione talking heatedly. They were clearly enjoying one another, debating with relish, but there was something under the surface a smoldering ember that looked capable of bursting into flame at the slightest provocation. It was a shame both of them didn't see it, or pretended not to see it. Perhaps they were afraid to. Everyone knew they were good for one another; everyone, it seemed, except themselves.

Snape had obviously scored some telling point in their current argument, and Hermione conceded with recalcitrant grace. Not for the first time, Ginny wondered exactly what Severus Snape was thinking. At that moment, he turned and looked directly at her, as if he'd read her mind, and he nodded, his expression rather bland and inscrutable. He turned back to Hermione, solicitously offering to refresh her drink along with his own. She smiled her thanks, and he rose with impressive dignity and went into the kitchen, where the men were gathered around the makeshift bar.

Ginny approached Hermione with a smile. "Alright, love?"

Hermione returned her smile and gave her a soft kiss, sweetly lingering a moment. "Never better."

Ginny sat down in Snape's chair. "So, when are you two going to move beyond these great conversations and start having great sex? It's obvious you're crazy about one another."

Hermione rolled her eyes. "Obvious to you, maybe. I don't know."

Ginny frowned. "Are you telling me that Snape *isn't* attracted to you? It doesn't look that way from where I'm sitting."

Hermione glanced at the door, as if waiting for him to re-appear. For a moment, Ginny thought her friend was going to cry.

"I want that, Ginny. I want him. But I'm afraid he is still faithful to the memory of Harry's mum. I can't compete with that." She gave Ginny a watery smile. "Besides, if he's truly interested in anything beyond a good conversation, he's got a funny way of showing it."

Ginny leaned forward and kissed her cheek. It was warm and fragrant. In that moment, Ginny wished with all her heart she could take Hermione to her bed and make love to her until the hurt and rejection went away. She tamped down her desire as quickly as it came. They had spent quite a few nights together, but Ginny knew in her heart that, for all that she loved Ginny, Hermione's heart belonged to someone else. Someone whom Ginny suspected cared just as much for Hermione, but was afraid to show it.

For a split second, Ginny thought *she* might cry. Instead, she gave her friend another kiss. "Give him time, babe. He's never struck me as a player; I think he's just as scared as you about getting hurt again." She pulled away, and for a moment, she wondered if she was talking more about Snape or herself when she added, "These Potters are hell on hearts."

-oOo-

Severus Snape had told some insanely huge lies in his life, but he'd always prided himself that he never lied to himself. That was perhaps the biggest lie of all.

He told himself that he was no longer a slave to the adolescent urges that had once driven him to do and say things which only resulted in shame and regret. He told himself the passions of youth and body and heart no longer dictated his actions. He was a rational wizard; he had learned what must be lived with, and lived without. A man like Severus Snape was destined to be alone, and he had long ago made his peace with solitude.

He was such a liar.

This lie was proven now as he lay naked in his darkened bedroom at one o'clock in the afternoon, stroking his cock with one large, warm hand, fondling his sac with the other. He could tell himself it was boredom, or restlessness, or he fancied an afternoon nap and a good wank would help him sleep. But it was none of those things. It was the face of Hermione Granger, looming wanton and irresistible in his fantasy, which made him close his eyes and cradle his balls gently, imagining her soft and capable hand caressing him, her sweet-lipped mouth an inch away from his cock, licking her lips in anticipation.

"Open up and suck me, my love. Oh, yes, that's a good girl," he whispered, and he whimpered as his traitorously vivid imagination supplied him with the vision of those lips parting and accepting his iron-hard prick. It slid slowly into her hot mouth, while he buried his hands in her wild mane of curls and pulled her down, all the way down...

He was close now; firm, swift, knowing strokes were taking him to the inevitable conclusion. He let his head drop back as he pictured her, rising to straddle his hips, lowering her lovely body onto his, and he could almost feel the wet heat of her as she ground down on his eager, needy cock. She rode him hard, taking him over, soaking his pubic hair with her juices, the juices he had produced with his tender ministrations. In his mind's eye, he toyed with a velvety nipple while his thumb danced over her clit with knowing precision. In his fantasies, he always knew how to make her come.

"Severus," she moaned, shuddering, head flung back, a Valkyrie riding her stallion to Valhalla, keening, "I'm coming, oh love, I'm -"

"Coming! Oh, fuck, yes, Hermione oh, I'm coming for you!" he cried, and growled as his cock sprayed his release into the dark room. It burst from him in the same cadence as her name, which hissed from his lips with each pulsing jet of hot semen, like a spell that, once uttered, had to be repeated until it had fulfilled its purpose. He fell

back, exhausted, breathless. White spots danced behind his eyes, and it was several minutes before his trip-hammer heartbeat slowed to normal, and he could take a deep, relaxing breath.

It was a damn good fantasy; he hadn't climaxed that hard or that long in ages.

As he muttered a cleansing charm, he felt at once sated and yearning, and he knew that, even though his longing was in vain, he could no more turn away from it than he could his duty. At one time he was more disciplined; now that the war was over, he had no real reason not to pursue a relationship. The only thing holding him back was his own surety of rejection.

He groaned and forced himself to get out of bed and dress. It was the first week of the summer hols; Hogwarts was preternaturally quiet, with only a skeleton crew of teachers around. Even Argus was absent; he and Mrs. Norris had gone to visit his niece in Crewe. Argus would return a month before school reopened, pudgy from stodgy food and little exercise, pink-cheeked from taking long walks, and sporting several new jumpers. Argus' niece loved knitting patterns even more than Albus had.

Thoughts of Albus always followed him at the end of a school year. It had been about this time of year when Severus had been ordered by Voldemort to return to Hogwarts that final year of the war as Headmaster. It had been the most horrific year of his life; it was then he had learned the true measurement, weight and colour of solitude. It was roughly the size, shape and breadth of Headmaster Nigellus Black's portrait the one that kept him company while Potter, Weasley and Granger went on the run for their lives. He'd had to play the waiting game in his prison and keep the children safe while appearing to do anything but.

"A walk will do you good," he said quietly. Like all loners, he often talked with himself when no one else was around. Of course, he wouldn't be caught dead talking to himself in front of anyone else, but at least he was still free to carry on a conversation while alone.

Severus walked down the steps of the main entrance into the Scottish June sun. It was almost warm; summer was finally upon them. He acknowledged Hagrid with a friendly nod as he passed by his hut. The half-giant smiled upon seeing Severus and threw up a massive hand in greeting.

"Afternoon, Headmaster, Sir! Takin' a stroll to enjoy th' weather?"

"Clearing the head, more like, Hagrid," he replied, mildly. "I fancied a walk around the Black Lake. Any messages for the giant squid?" It was an old joke between them.

He could see white teeth gleaming through the tangle of beard. "Tell him to stay away from the mermaids. People are startin' to talk. Enjoy yer walk, Perfesser, and feel free ta stop by fer a cuppa when yer done."

With a nod, Severus went on his way. The day grew warmer; he removed his cloak as he walked, and his thoughts strayed back to Hermione Granger. He permitted himself the indulgence of continuing to think back to those dark days. He could do so now without the sickening tang of remorse tainting his every memory.

As the grisly events of that year played out, Severus had gone from most wanted wizard to Headmaster of Hogwarts, and the nightmare that was his life had threatened to break him utterly, every day, in a thousand different ways. The students rebelled and caused disruption constantly. His colleagues despised him and thwarted him at every opportunity.

The only comfort he had was receiving reports about the 'Golden Trio' from Headmaster Nigellus Black's portrait, the one whose extra frame Hermione was dragging around with them in some sort of bag she'd charmed with undetectable extensions. Clever little chit had used the portrait to spy on him, knowing he was doing the same. It was a notion that Severus found almost comforting, as if the portrait was their little unacknowledged communication link, and she was speaking directly to him through the canvas.

Only his conversations with Headmaster Black gave him any sort of feeling of hope. Black often told him of the trio's exploits, their narrow escapes and their trials. Granger and Weasley seemed to have an on-again, off-again relationship that somehow managed to rub Severus the wrong way every time he thought of it. All he could think was that Weasley was not good enough for a brilliant and resourceful witch like Granger.

One morning, Severus arose and, after his morning ablutions, greeted the Headmaster in the portrait, who cocked a baleful eye at his counterpart. "Well, if you've been saving yourself for the chit, I wouldn't bother."

Severus sighed as he got dressed. "Phineas, what are you babbling about? I realise I haven't had my coffee, but this is cryptic even for you, I fear. What exactly am I saving for whom?"

Headmaster Black scoffed. "Your maidenhead, you love-struck fool! The silly witch decided to play house last night."

Severus blinked, but managed to sound indifferently interested. "So Weasley wore her down at last?"

The portrait's expression grew obscenely lecherous. "Apparently the poor girl couldn't make up her mind. All three had a go at one other. Ménage a trois, they call it. Scrum, I call it. I've never seen such a tangle of arms, legs and arses."

Severus kept his face carefully neutral, telling himself his heart had *not* started pounding. "Indeed?" he drawled. "The earth moved? The angels wept? Did the trump sound?"

Black chortled. "It barely farted. Poor girl, she tried her best to lie back and think of England, but she barely had time to get to the Channel Islands before it was over. A few grunts, a couple of muffled cries, and the boys were rolling over and snoring before the girl could get out from under them."

"Did they hurt her?" Severus could hear the anger in his voice, and Black, the consummate Slytherin, heard it as well, and was already looking for ways to exploit it.

"Well, she didn't sound like she was being sawn in half, if that's what you're wanting to know."

"Don't be so crude, Phineas! Was the girl forced?"

"Don't be such a prude, Headmaster! No, she wasn't forced. She was originally... enthusiastic enough. But I'm afraid the boys' enthusiasm was a little more, erm, hair-trigger?" Severus sighed. So she had succumbed to the hormonal tide of too much loneliness and fear. "It was inevitable, I suppose," Headmaster Black was saying, watching Severus covertly. "Of course I didn't see anything, but it sounded like it was pretty much over after the girl was breached. However..."

Severus almost ignored him. He hated being the straight man for this pompous arse. "However...?"

Black smirked. "The young men weren't exactly through with one another. When the poor girl took the watch, they went after one another like rabbits. I haven't heard so much buggery performed since the Slytherins won the last house cup."

It was too much. "Enough!" Severus snapped. "I don't want to hear about this." He finished dressing in murderous silence. The painted Headmaster watched Severus carefully, and finding nothing he could use to pry open the clamshell-tight exterior that was Headmaster Snape, departed in huffy bad grace back to the other portrait.

Alone, Severus faced the mirror as he combed his hair and he studied his face. He looked no different than before, but he found himself wondering if Hermione was facing a mirror today, and seeing a different person. A woman, made so by the breaking of her maidenhead. It irritated Severus to find himself so disgruntled that the girl had given herself so carelessly to these so-called 'friends' of hers.

It irritated him that they used her, when it must have been obvious, even to her, what they had really wanted was one another. He found himself jealous they'd had her first, and wondered which had done the 'having.' Weasley, most likely. And what of poor Ginevra Weasley, who had mooned over Potter since her first year? Rumour was they had started a relationship last year before the trio was forced into hiding.

In spite of Headmaster Black's accusation, Severus was by no means a prude. If two men found comfort and pleasure and love with one another, it was no one's business but theirs. But he found himself thinking more of the women who had depended on that love. If Headmaster Black was telling the truth (and Severus saw no reason he would lie), then Potter's and Weasley's selfishness would destroy the faith of two fine witches.

As the weeks followed, Severus found himself feeling very protective of Hermione, traveling alone with two hormonal, horny boys, one of whom very recently had professed his love for her. He came to accept the essential truth: he wanted her for himself. More than that, he wished he could give her something back - pleasure, the rapturous feeling of being cherished. Hermione deserved it the simple act of lying with a man, and knowing that she was the only one he wanted in his bed.

Severus began to fantasise about what her face would look like, rosy and flushed with passion, how she would sound when she came. It was an idle fantasy, something to think about on the long nights when sleep would not come, and Lily Evans' face only brought more remorse and guilt. Walking into what should have been the last hour of his life, his only thought was that he would have liked to have seen Hermione again before his death, before discharging the last of his duties to the woman who had broken his heart many years before.

But finding himself quite alive, recovered from a near-mortal snakebite and returned to the more-or-less grateful bosom of Wizarding society had actually not changed him much. It certainly had not quelled the fantasies at all. If anything, they allowed him to finally let go of the past and the knowledge that he was no longer living to die for Lily.

But it had also served as a reminder of his own pitiful lack of potential as a lover. And now, like a fool, he constantly found any excuse to sit near Hermione when circumstance brought them together. He followed her around like a third year; he could not seem to help himself. The fact that she indulged him made him both grateful and humiliated that he should treasure her scraps so ardently.

But it was not meant to be. Hermione was too many things too smart, too clever, too Gryffindor, too young, too good for him. He hated feeling inadequate; he hated even more she never made him feel inadequate around her; he performed this service well enough for himself. Their similarities and their mutual admiration made him long all the more for something he knew he could never have. The last Order reunion was a perfect example. They had sat at the same table for almost the entire time, talking, debating, arguing. Severus had thoroughly enjoyed himself. Too much.

He sighed. He was going to have to stop going to these meetings. His pleasure when he was with her only served to throw up in sharp relief how difficult it was when he returned to his sterile, monk-like existence at Hogwarts.

The next time Molly invites me to one of these functions, I'm going to say no. I mean it, and I won't cave in and relent, like this last time...

-o0o-

Hermione dropped her quill and rubbed her eyes. It was no use. She had dawdled for the last thirty minutes and finally managed to write only one sentence of her proposal. One sodding sentence. And it was due in forty-eight hours.

She got up and turned on the Wizarding wireless, tuning it until she heard the strains of one of her favourite Wizarding groups, Nu Wauge. She closed her eyes and allowed the soft, almost hypnotic sound to wash over her. Its low, vibratory hum seemed to wind into her, and she stirred restlessly. Her fingers slid over the tips of her nipples, sending a pulse of desire through her, but she stopped before she gave in and started seriously playing with herself.

She really needed to get laid soon, or she would go spare. She resisted the temptation to call Ginny; she would be more than accommodating, and it would be enjoyable, but Hermione knew in her heart it would be nothing more for either of them than relieving tension, a sort of masturbation-by-proxy. She felt guilty in engaging her friend to do nothing more or less than she could do for herself with a good vibrator.

Hermione sighed, and thought, of course, about Severus Snape. Damn him! He was the reason she'd written seven words in the last hour. Spending such an enjoyable afternoon at the reunion the previous week was almost as bad as not seeing him at all. Each time she came to one of these do's she ended up feeling like the worst sort of masochist for deliberately seeking him out and monopolising his time.

He didn't seem the least bit interested in her as a woman, and that hurt. At the party, she'd practically thrown herself at him. He had been polite, attentive, solicitous, engaging, witty, sexy as fuck... but there was no interest, not a flicker. She'd given him every available opportunity, short of crawling on his lap and molesting him, and he'd treated her with the same pleasant inscrutability as he did Molly. No - he was actually more affectionate with Molly. *Thanks for that, Hermione. Now you've really depressed yourself.*

Hermione was usually above picking up dates in Knockturn Alley for one-night stands, but she thought she might be close to pondering it seriously. She made a face as she wandered into the kitchen for a snack. No. She might be desperate, but her desperation seemed to centre on one wizard only: Severus Snape. She might be gagging for a shag, but there was only one man she wanted to do it with.

Once she'd realised that Ron and Harry were serious about only each other, she had found it easy to let them go. Why couldn't she do the same with Severus Snape? After all, he had never loved her, he didn't want her or need her. When did infatuation and interest turn into a longing that was dangerously close to tipping over into obsession?

It would have amused and dismayed her to know how close her thoughts mirrored Severus'. She, too, thought of the past; that last, horrific year before the end of the war.

The months that Hermione, Ron and Harry spent on the run were sort of a blur. Even to this day, there were blank, fuzzy spots in her memory, as if she'd been poorly Obliviated. Anyway, most of what she could remember wasn't exactly a trip to Alton Towers.

She remembered feelings, emotions, more than actual events. The gut-churning fear of being one step ahead of the Snatchers and the Death Eaters, the painful hunger when food was nonexistent. The frustration of looking for Horcruxes that didn't want to be found, and the agony of being tortured by Bellatrix Lestrange.

And then there was the ache she didn't think about. Ron and Harry gradually discovered their love for one another during their enforced time on the run. Their clumsy effort to include her one night had been a lame attempt to assuage their guilt. At the time, she'd been so frightened and desperate and needy and insecure, and lying between the two of them had seemed like the most beautiful way for them to cement their relationship. She was fully certain that at least one of them wouldn't survive the war; she certainly wasn't going to go into the final battle a virgin. She honestly wasn't thinking beyond that.

And so, fueled with several glasses of purloined firewhisky, the three of them found themselves in bed one totally awkward and extremely unsatisfying evening shortly before Ron left her and Harry. As she returned from her watch to lie beside the snoring boys - who, if she were perfectly honest, had enjoyed each other more than either had enjoyed her - she felt more and more resentful for the more-than-pleased-with-themselves look on their sleeping faces.

Hermione had felt... well, cheated. Where were the fireworks, the lights bursting behind her eyes during the peak of her ecstasy? Where was the feeling of becoming one with her lover, the aching, desperate need to feel him, to be pleased and pleasure in return? All Hermione felt was a dull ache between her legs and a distinct feeling that a cleansing charm wouldn't quite cut it this time.

Having sex for the first time had felt like like hunting for Horcruxes: terribly important, but since they didn't know what they were doing, mostly unsuccessful and rather boring. And like hunting for Horcruxes, she couldn't rid herself of the feeling she was missing something fundamentally important about the way she was going about it.

So, she had smiled and pretended from then on to be too tired, too stressed, too busy, too menstrual. In the end, it didn't matter. They never noticed all the times she returned from watch to find them tangled together. The love on their faces told her all she needed to know, and after the initial shock of Ron leaving them, she felt so sorry for Harry she learned to love them both enough to accept it, even though she wanted to kill Ron for leaving him so bereft.

A year later, Ginny confronted her after finding out the hard way about Harry and Ron. And somehow, she'd found herself in Ginny's bed, and was shocked to realise that Ginny not only knew a lot about sex, but enjoyed teaching Hermione as well. It was lovely, but it wasn't love, and they were both realistic enough not to shoehorn it into a pale imitation of love.

Ginny walked into the shop just at closing time, and gave her brother George a smile. "Hello, baby sister," he called, waving a cheery goodbye to his last customer. "What brings the hero of the Holyhead Harpies to Diagon Alley on this lovely summer day?"

Ginny smiled and pecked George on the cheek. "I need something really special, George. I need to play matchmaker for some friends."

George rolled his eyes heavenward. "Excellent, and about time, too! I wondered when you were going to get as sick as I am, watching the clueless wonders blundering about."

Ginny started. "Wait who what are you talking about?"

He laughed. "Granger and Snape, of course! Merlin, I've never seen two more inept people! They fancy the hell out of one another. I don't know what they're waiting for. So," he said, warming up to the subject. "What do we need to do to get these two out of their comfort zones and into the bedroom?"

Ginny sighed. She's known somehow George would understand. "I'd like to do something for them. In a way, they were both there for me when I needed them, and I want to be there for them to discover they're both on the same page about one another."

"This sounds wickedly fun! I almost wish I was in on it."

Ginny nodded. She wasn't about to tell him her entire plan. "I think I need something really special for both of them. I want... oh, something that combines the truth-compelling properties of Veritaserum, coupled with the inhibition-suppressors of a lust potion, mixed with a sincerity elixir of the True Love Certainty potion."

George thought for a moment. "So you want them to only react to this if they truly feel an attraction to one another; it needs to make them confess their true feelings, and it will lower their inhibitions to the point where they will be tearing at one another's clothing in five minutes?"

At Ginny's broad grin, George rewarded her with a beatific smile. "Step into my parlour, little sister. I've got the perfect solution."

Ginny walked out of the shop twenty minutes later, a beautifully-wrapped box under one arm, and a very pleased smile on her face.

Two

Chapter 2 of 2

Everyone knows that Hermione Granger and Headmaster Severus Snape are perfect for one another – everyone, it seems, except Hermione and Severus. Ginny Weasley decided to take matters in her own hands with a box of enchanted chocolates and her own matchmaking skills. Written for the LJ HP_3ForFun community.

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Thanks to my beautiful Beta for always buffing up my stories to a lovely shine. I always hoped for the best. I got her.

This is the concluding chapter of my little mini fluff-a-thon.

Please note this chapter contains explicit sexual content between three consenting adults.

"Are you sure Severus won't mind me tagging along?" Hermione asked, her eyes uncertain as they met Ginny's in the full-length mirror. "You did ask him, didn't you, Gin?"

"Oh, I'm sure I did." Ginny made a dismissive gesture. "It doesn't really matter, Hermione. I just need to have a quick word about this Quidditch demonstration the Federation wants me to do at Hogwarts, and today was the day Snape asked me to come. We're just going to be there for ten, fifteen minutes tops, then we can go shopping in Hogsmeade, alright?"

Ginny straightened her jacket, and reached forward to adjust the straps of Hermione's dress. "But there's no law that says you can't go there dressed to kill, now, is there?" she grinned. She stepped back and gave Hermione an appraising look. Hermione was wearing a summer dress in a gorgeous shade of fuchsia, which made her skin glow. Ginny herself wore a trouser suit that was almost formal in its design, had it not been a lovely buttery yellow with white piping.

They stood side by side and solemnly regarded themselves in the mirror. Biting her lip, Hermione said, "Do you think I look well ..."

"Shaggable? Most definitely," Ginny replied. With a wicked gleam in her eye, she added, "I'd lick it."

"Oi, you!" Hermione gave her friend a playful swat. "You are truly incorrigible." Her expression softened. "Thanks. It's good to know that someone finds me attractive. By the way, you look pretty dishy yourself."

Almost as an afterthought, Ginny produced a lovely box, obviously some sort of present, shrank it down to roughly the size of a matchbox, and handed it to Hermione. Puzzled, Hermione examined the little box. "What's this?"

Ginny shrugged. "According to you, Severus likes dark chocolate; ergo, you're taking him a little pressie."

Hermione's brows furrowed. Rather dryly, she countered, "But what shall I say is the occasion?"

Ginny rolled her eyes. "Hermione, don't be dense. You're taking Severus a present, and every time he sees this box he will think of you."

Hermione stared at her friend for several seconds, shaking her head. "Fine, I'll make up something, then." She shook her head. "You're a devious little ginger! And they call *me* scary."

Thinking of the item she had already stowed in her own pocket, Ginny thought, *You ain't seen nothing yet, girl.*

Severus looked around his study for the fourth time, and cursed himself for the fifth time. He'd already called himself an idiot before he decided to make sure his study was tidy and homey for his guests. Ginevra had cornered him at the last Order reunion to ask if she could stop 'round for a visit at Hogwarts to discuss a Quidditch demonstration, and having little else to do but take long walks around the lake and visit Hagrid for tea, Severus had welcomed the diversion.

Then two days before her meeting, she'd sent an owl saying that Hermione would be joining her. In the past twenty-four hours, Severus had pogo'd from excitement to dread to hope to despair to resigned contentment. At the very least, he would be afforded a plausible excuse to be near her; that would have to be enough. Perhaps

He had donned his nicest robes, then cursed himself for being a sad old git for trying to impress a pretty young woman, then put on his second-nicest. He stared at himself in the mirror and, with an irritated growl, changed back into his best.

He turned in the mirror, trying to convince himself that he looked pretty good for a bachelor wizard in his forties. His body had filled out a little in the last few years due to a better diet and lack of the gut-churning anxiety that often left him feeling as if his stomach was lined with barbed wire. He was still trim; his sashed and belted waist was slim, and pleasing to his own eye. At least he hadn't gone to fat like Lucius Malfoy, he thought, smirking at his reflection. He thought he might actually be growing into his looks, but at this age, he bloody well hoped he'd already done that.

He felt a sudden rush of hope race through him; it was almost like a wave of magic, and he looked into the mirror and saw a man who was trembling, hoping, daring to dream, and it thrilled and scared him. He re-tied his sash for the fifth time, and this time it lay perfectly against his robe in a symmetrical knot that satisfied him.

The chime sounded, alerting him of guests arriving at the entrance to his study. His gargoyle, Dave, would soon be admitting them upstairs. Severus checked his appearance in his mirror one last time. "I've already said you look very nice today," the old mirror wheezed. "Five times." Severus resisted the temptation to stick out his tongue at the mirror, and arranging his expression into more placid, calm lines, he went to the door to receive his guests.

The sight of the two young women breezing into his study brought two disparate thoughts to mind: one was that they looked like two colourful butterflies that had fluttered their way into the castle. The other was that Hermione looked edible. He was having a hard time appearing equally happy to see both of them, instead of only her.

Both women rose on tiptoe to kiss his cheek in greeting; he felt an especial thrill when Hermione's kiss lingered just that little bit longer. Hating himself for the flush he could feel rising to his cheeks, he barked, "Mitsy!"

An elf in a Hogwarts tea towel appeared. "Yes, Headmaster, sir?" she squeaked, her large jade eyes bright and friendly.

"Tea all 'round, Mitsy. And please ask Dropsy if she would make some of her excellent cakes for our guests."

Hermione pretended to be interested as Severus and Ginny turned to the purpose of the meeting, but she was in reality listening to the beautiful tones of Severus' voice, a delightfully rich, silken, sinful baritone that had awed her even as a student. It had its own musical quality; she found herself watching his mouth as he pushed the words from his lips. It was a dance of teeth and tongues and sounds, and more than once, she caught his eye as he glanced her way. They smiled at one another, like old friends do, but there was something in the air that was different. Both could sense it, but neither understood it.

As the last of the tea and cakes were consumed, Ginny concluded her business, chatting amicably away with Severus. Hermione had always secretly envied how Ginny seemed able to speak on any subject, putting everyone around her at ease. She felt a wave of affection for the youngest Weasley, even while she wondered again if her own inclusion at this meeting was more than casual.

Ginny was saying, "So, Snape, do you usually spend the entire summer here at the school? It must be very relaxing - all this peace and quiet."

Severus elegantly crossed his feet. "It is quiet, but there are a few diversions. The Black Lake is lovely this time of year, and Hagrid is always inviting me round for tea..." He could see the two young women catching one another's eye, and their suppressed laughter. Suddenly he chuckled, and when he spoke, there was a tone in his voice as refreshing as a dry martini, chilled and stirred to perfection. "Actually, it's mind-numbingly dull here during the holidays, but as Headmaster, I am required to live here, so any diversion is welcome."

They all shared a quiet laugh. Hermione, emboldened and charmed by his relaxed candor, replied, "Well, this is fortuitous, then you have the chance to be entertained by two gorgeous women this afternoon."

Severus raised an elegant eyebrow at her teasing tone, and saluted her with his teacup. "I always count myself fortunate to be in your presence, Hermione."

Ginny smiled. *One all*, she thought. Hermione apparently thought so as well, adding boldly, "We'll just have to make sure you get regular visits, then, until school starts."

"I would always appreciate your company." Severus was pleased at how casual he managed to sound, in spite of the way his heart beat against his chest at her teasing, flirtatious comment.

He looked at her intently, and for the first time, Hermione felt like they were getting somewhere at last. She smiled at him, and not wanting to blurt out something to spoil the moment, turned back to the glowing embers in the blazing fireplace.

"It's certainly very cozy and welcoming here. I love a fire," she murmured.

Before he could stop himself, he said, "So do I. You can get lost in one." Hermione's eyes met his, and what he saw almost took his breath away. He smoothed a nonexistent crease from his robes to hide his uncertainty.

Her eyes widened. "Ah, I almost forgot!" Hermione exclaimed. She pulled a package from her pocket and enlarged it to its proper size. "See, I- I've brought along the perfect for afters."

It was a wooden box covered in heavy cream watered silk, tied with Honeyduke's familiar lime-green velvet bow. Hermione placed it on the coffee table and looked up at him expectantly. Ginny, sensing Severus' confusion, supplied, "We remembered you saying you were a fan of Honeydukes' Dark Finest."

Severus tilted his head in *that* way, and Hermione's witty banter flew out the window. "Actually," she confessed, "it was Ginny's idea. You see, I love chocolate as well, and I think I mentioned well, it was the last minute I thought you might - Something to remember me by?" She finished lamely, and grimaced. "Oh, I can *feel* Ginny rolling her eyes at me from here."

Both Severus and Ginny were laughing. Ginny sighed and looked at Severus. "Hopeless, this one. I wondered how long it would take her to blow her cover."

Severus shook his head, his smirk firmly in place. "I do seem to recall that your usual impulse is to babble incessantly when nervous *Miss Granger*."

Hermione blushed, and to her credit, she laughed as well, to show she was not adverse to a good joke, even if it was on herself. "Well, *do* remember you saying you preferred dark chocolate, so..."

Ginny decided to put them both out of their misery. Merlin, they were pathetic! She patted the sofa seat between her and Hermione, and said with a brisk voice, "Come on, then, Snape, open your pressie. You're not the only one who loves Honeydukes. We're counting on you to share."

"Ah, ulterior motives," he replied, smirking. With a pounding heart, Severus moved to sit between the two women. He sat rather stiffly on the edge of the sofa, and forced his hands to remain steady as he untied the bow. He glanced to his right, and Hermione was looking at him solemnly, her eyes large and full of something he didn't dare believe he saw.

The ribbon fell to either side of the box, and Severus lifted the lid. The three of them sniffed appreciatively as the rich, irresistible scent wafted from the opened box. "Oh, gods," Hermione murmured, and Severus watched her in wonder as she closed her eyes and inhaled as if sniffing the most alluring of perfumes. "That is such a gorgeous aroma. No one makes chocolate like Honeydukes."

Severus picked up the box. It looked delicate in his large hands. "I would be honoured if you'd both join me. Would you like one, Ginevra?"

With the slightest of hesitations, she shook her head. "As much as I would love one, I'm in training at the moment." She looked genuinely regretful.

"Ah, then, far be it from me to lead you into temptation," he said, smirking. He turned to Hermione, and with every ounce of seduction he could dial into his voice, he purred, "A gift this special is really too lovely not to share." An elegant eyebrow accompanied his invitation. "*You* will join me, won't you, Hermione?"

She bit her lip in a way that made his mouth water, and meeting his eyes with a coy little smile, she looked down in the box and chose a large, pyramid-shaped piece.

In return, he chose a rounded chocolate with a tiny piece of candied ginger on top. It was obviously fashioned to resemble an erect nipple; the imagery was not lost on either of them. To cover his embarrassment, Severus saluted Hermione with the chocolate, and placed the entire piece in his mouth. As it melted on his tongue, Hermione watched him carefully, unable to tear her eyes away from his gaze. Almost imperceptibly, something changed. A hint of surprise flashed in his eyes, and he chewed the chocolate slowly, as if savouring it to its fullest. She watched, fascinated, as he swallowed, and licked his lips.

He took a deep breath, and seemed to grow more relaxed. "I must put in my order now," he drawled. "This is without a doubt the most delicious chocolate I've ever tasted." He turned to Hermione, his large eyes warm and inviting. She looked surprised as he plucked the chocolate she still held in her fingers, and lifted it toward her mouth. With the slightest hint of a smile, he purred intimately, "I want you to enjoy this as much as I did."

Almost shyly, Hermione leaned forward and nibbled the chocolate from his fingers. He knew he was breathing hard, but he could not stop himself from gasping as her soft tongue darted out and brushed against his fingertips.

She closed her eyes and chewed slowly, a soft moan of pleasure sounding in her throat. Severus sat back against the sofa and watched her swallow. She sat, her hands primly pressed against her legs, and looked back at him with such longing and love it caught in his heart and he almost choked from it. Before he could stop himself, he whispered, "I wish you could see yourself the way I do, Hermione."

She closed her eyes for a moment, and when they opened, she looked afraid, and uncertain. With a voice tender with yearning, she replied, "H-How do you see me, Severus?"

Unable to stop himself, he reached forward to catch one of her mad curls. It twined around his finger like a living rope, ensnaring him. All the uncertainty and insecurity he'd ever felt melted away with the chocolate on his tongue, and he caressed her cheek. "I see you as a goddess. I see you as the siren that calls to me in my dreams and haunts my fantasies." He stopped to take a breath, and was thrilled to see her staring at him with eyes that were wide and full of hope. Her expression changed from uncertain to stunned, to a sort of disbelieving happiness, and he grasped her hand and clasped it in his.

His voice grew stronger in confidence, and he opened up to her, unable to stop the torrent of passion flying from his lips. "I see you as the woman I want in my bed, as the mother of my children and the keeper of my heart. I see you as the nymph riding me, as the angel under me." His voice faltered, as he desperately hoped he was reading her expression correctly. "I see you as my light and my joy. I see you as a powerful and beautiful witch who could break my heart, or send me to heaven with a word."

Hermione's eyes glowed, and she shook her head. "The last thing in this world I would want to do is break your heart, Severus. I- I'm in love with you." Her voice broke, and to his surprise tears welled into her eyes. "Do you know what it's like, hearing the one you love say all these things the things you've only ever dreamed of?" She closed her eyes in a kind of rapture. "I've made myself come dreaming of you saying those things to me, and now my heart feels like it's going to explode!" When her eyes opened, they shone with joy. She blessed him with a radiant smile. "I love you so much it hurts, Severus Snape."

Severus moved closer, and grasped her lovely face in his hands. Both of them were trembling. "Tell me you aren't teasing me, Hermione." His voice sounded wild and hoarse to his own ears. "Tell me the truth. Tell me "

"I love you, Severus!" Hermione's slender hands clamped around his pale wrists like shackles to hold him to her heart. "I only go to those dreadful parties because I want to be near you, to talk to you. I spend my weekends doing research so I'll have something interesting to say, so you'll sit and talk with me. I ask you complex questions just to hear the sound of your voice."

He almost sagged in relief. Her hands loosened their iron grip on his wrists, and she stroked his hands, as if entranced. "I use every excuse I can think of to monopolise your time," she continued, "just so I can be near enough to breathe in the scent of your aftershave, just to look into your beautiful eyes. The fact that you're simply touching me right now is making me wet for you."

Severus felt his heart bloom in his chest. He closed his eyes. His normally measured voice was rough and throbbing with emotion. "I'm in love with you, Hermione. I have been for so long now. I think about making love to you constantly. I crave you. I think if you don't touch me I'm going to die, I - " He stopped, trying to catch his runaway emotions before he, too burst into tears. He closed his eyes and took a deep breath to calm himself. "I only truly feel alive when I see you walk into a room. Other than that, I'm just waiting. Waiting for you to appear and give me something to look forward to. Hermione," he murmured, and before he could lean forward to kiss her, she was moving toward him, her heart-shaped lips descending on his.

Severus had never been kissed like this by anyone. Her mouth fused to his, and she softly suckled against his lips until he was like a sheet of flame, burning hot from head to toe, and then his hands were buried in her hair and he was pulling her to him, oblivious of the fact that another person was in the room; heedless of the fact that he'd never so much as held Hermione's hand or returned her friendly kisses on his cheek.

With a moan that sounded feral and raw and ridiculously loud to his own ears, he opened his mouth and felt her tongue slide into it, and he slanted her head to drink from her precious mouth, so soft, so eager for him. He urged her lips apart, and he opened her like a beautiful box of chocolates. His hand slid down her neck, around her waist, and pulled her to him, pressing her warm and soft body to his.

She allowed him to suck her tongue into his mouth, and when it retreated, his followed obediently, swiping against her palate, and she whimpered helplessly. Her hands caressed his face, and he slowly pulled away from her, unable to take his eyes from her red, swollen, wet lips. Her eyes were closed, and he kissed each lid, as gently as he was able; as gently as his almost uncontrollable desire would allow him.

With a face shining with blissful love and relief, Hermione melted into his arms, and Severus pressed her head against his chest, crooning to her, murmuring soft nonwords. It was the very soundsex of purring eroticism to Hermione, and she pressed her lips to his robes.

With the first mad passionate declaration assuaged, Severus turned back to Ginny and shook his head. "That was extremely devious, Miss Weasley. You always were more Slytherin than your brothers."

Ginny merely smirked. She could practically hear the wheels turning as understanding dawned in Hermione's face. She grinned at Hermione, all unrepentance and complacency. Hermione straightened and looked from Severus to her friend.

"Ginny, you didn't!" she cried, looking closely at the redhead. She glanced down at the box of chocolates. Her eyes widened. "You did!" She turned to Severus, her face white and horrified. "I didn't know about it, Severus, honestly I didn't! I just -" she stopped, and her face softened as she gazed at him. "Gods, you have beautiful eyes. I could look into them for eternity and never tire of it. I just want to be with you every moment of the day, Severus. I just want-" She squeezed her eyes shut and forced herself to turn away, even as Severus started to laugh. "Oh! How could you, Gin? After all we've been through."

Ginny reached over Severus to take Hermione's hand in hers. "I dared, because you two mean so much to me, and you were driving me around the bleeding twist, doing

this silly little dance around one another." She looked from one surprised face to the other and burst out laughing. "Honestly, you two are pathetic. You obviously fancy the pants off one another, and you were both too afraid to make a move." She kissed Hermione's hand and gave a little shrug. "I love you, Hermione. You're my best friend in the world, and you were there at a time when I didn't know what I wanted or why I wanted it. But you love Severus, and he loves you, and if it took a little extra help to get you two to admit it, what's the harm in it?"

"Because it's its cheating!" Hermione looked at Severus with eyes that were so afraid. "Severus, what if it's the potion talking, and not you? I don't think I could bear it!"

Severus sighed. He turned to Ginny with a tight smile. "Excuse me, Ginevra." He turned back to Hermione and pulled her into his arms. "Hermione Granger, it feels like I've loved you forever. When I was in hospital, you were the only one who didn't treat me either as a pariah or a holy relic; you made me feel human again.

"You made me feel like life was worth living. I've been loving you from afar longer than I loved even Lily, and you've been more of a friend and a companion than she ever tried to be." He leaned forward and gently kissed her lips. "More fool me for being afraid to believe that you could return my affections, but I can assure you, this potion is compelling me to do nothing more than admitting my true feelings."

He turned back to Ginny. "A new concoction from the ingenious mind of your brother George, no doubt. Veritaserum, and... Certainty Potion?"

Ginny nodded. "And a little drop of Lust Potion thrown in for good measure, in case you were afraid to get the ball rolling." She pointedly looked down at Snape's crotch. "Not that you needed it."

Hermione, shivering under Severus' large warm hands, moaned softly when his fingers trailed across her earlobe. "That's one of her favourite spots, you know," Ginny murmured with a soft, knowing smile, and suddenly it all fell into place for Severus.

He looked from Hermione to Ginny. "Are you two have you been lovers?"

Hermione nodded. "In the past, yes. After I found out about Harry and Ron, Ginny and I came together one night. We were both hurt, and rejected and alone."

Understanding, Severus smiled and stroked her hair. "So you took comfort in one another. And pleasure."

She nodded. "We just wanted to feel desirable to someone again, and we both knew our hearts were safe with each other."

Severus shook his head. "You are the most desirable woman I have ever known." He stroked Hermione's face. "I want to take you to my bed and make love to you. I want to make you feel like the goddess you are to me. I'm yours, Hermione. I want you to be mine. I'll do anything you want."

Hermione leaned into his hand and pressed her lips against his palm. "I've always been yours, Severus."

He turned to Ginny. The words left his mouth like a benediction. "Thank you." He leaned forward and touched his lips to hers, and smiled. "You've no idea..." He broke off, and turned to Hermione, and his breath caught as he watched her lean over him and reach for Ginny. Their mouths touched, and Hermione's eyes fluttered closed as Severus stroked her back. "That's so beautiful," he groaned, seeing their little pink tongues flick against one another's. "Oh gods," he whispered, and his cock surged fully hard so quickly it left him dizzy. "You want her, too, oh gods, you understand how I feel..."

Their mouths were like cherries; ripe and sweet and soft, as the two women kissed one another over his lap. Ginny's hands threaded through Hermione's hair, and Severus suddenly pulled them both to him, his tongue darting out to catch Hermione's. He could not remember in his life feeling such naked, ravenous desire.

Hermione turned and caught his lips against hers again, pressing him against the back of the sofa. Through half-closed lids, Severus saw Ginny's mouth slide across Hermione's jaw, planting warm, hungry kisses against her throat. Hermione's nimble fingers worked the buttons of his robes free from their holes, and as he drained Hermione's delicious mouth, his kisses growing fevered and desperate, he was only dimly aware of the cool air on his skin as his robe was parted, revealing his pale chest.

Hermione felt as if she were moments away from madness. Her skin tingled in the wake of Severus' soft caresses, and even as Ginny kissed her, she was aware of Severus beside her - his heat, his mouth-watering scent, his soft moans which drove a barb of arousal so deeply into her core that she could feel her heartbeat pounding in her cunt, and she knew she was wetter than she'd ever been for anyone.

Severus watched silently as Hermione straightened again and opened his robe, her hands sliding over his pale, warm chest. He caught her hand in his, and pressed her fingers against his mouth. "Undress for me," he whispered against her fingertips, his voice as dark as midnight, low and soft and dangerous. His eyes bore into hers, and as one, Hermione and Ginny rose, and undressed one another slowly, languidly kissing the skin revealed as each garment was removed.

"Gods, Snape, isn't she beautiful?" Ginny whispered, and Severus looked up at Hermione with a look of rapacious heat. He caressed himself through his briefs, and Hermione's knees almost buckled. She thought she knew Severus Snape. She thought she understood the solemn, taciturn man she had sought after for the past who-knows-how-long. She didn't know this man sitting on the sofa, absently stroking his erection as he drank in the sight of her, standing before him, her breasts taut and cool in the air. He was blazing; his eyes were lit from within, and his mouth, parted slightly, looked soft and inviting. Their eyes locked, and his long tongue slid over his lips, as if anticipating a feast.

As he smoothly rose to his feet, Ginny caught his robe, pulling it from his body, revealing Severus in all his pale glory. "Merlin, Snape, you two look like angels," she said, and to her surprise, he smiled.

"If I do, it's because I want to be for you," he murmured hoarsely, his eyes still locked on Hermione's. She gazed at his form hungrily. He looked like a pagan god, a study in beautiful contrasts of dark and light, smooth and hard, skin and muscle. As they stood, touching one another, exploring one another, Ginny took advantage of the moment to help him remove the boots that rose to his knees, revealing long, pale feet.

"Gods, Severus. You are so beautiful," Hermione breathed, her hands roaming over his silvery pale body. "I can't believe I'm here with you now, after so long."

Ginny vanished the last of their clothing, leaving them to hiss and shiver at the touch of their naked skin against one another. Severus pressed Hermione against his chest, reveling in the feel of her beautiful breasts in his hands, even as she pressed hot, biting kisses across his chest, down to his abdomen, her soft hands sliding down his hips to his cock, jutting from his groin like a divining rod.

Hermione knelt at his feet, and his body instinctively surged toward her. He could feel her warm breath tickling the head of his cock, which was a shade darker than his skin and turgid in anticipation. He was dimly aware of Ginny kneeling behind Hermione, as she pulled him ever closer. He could not stop himself from whimpering as Hermione's soft hand closed around the base of his shaft. He thought of all the fantasies he'd spun that started like this, and when she leaned toward the head of his prick and licked her lips, he could not stop himself.

"Open up and suck me, my love." The words were out of his mouth before he could stop them, and when her eyes darted up to his, he was stunned by the carnal desire he saw in them.

She smiled, and her hand gripped his cock hard, and she crooned, "I have dreamed of this for so long," and slowly slid his cock in her mouth.

Severus cried out helplessly. It had been so long since anyone had touched him like this. Never had it been done with love, and, oh gods, he could feel the difference. He whimpered at the sheer erotic *rightness* of her mouth engulfing his cock. Her eyes were closed, and she sucked at him as if she knew exactly how good it felt, and she loved doing it to him. Hermione's mouth was hot and wet and tight; she lovingly painted his aching cock with her warm tongue. Her hand gently cradled his balls, instinctively giving him what he had so longed for, and his hips began to move against her knowing mouth, his groin full of heat and crippling pleasure, his heart pounding so hard he could feel it pulsing inside her mouth.

Hermione moaned deeply in her throat. It was a feral sound that reverberated down into his balls, and he opened his eyes to see Ginny, behind Hermione, pressed against

his lover, her fingers dancing between the swollen pink lips of Hermione's pussy. The other hand plucked and rolled one of Hermione's nipples as Ginny placed biting kisses on his lover's shoulder. He was helpless to stop the blooming fire racing down his spine into his cock and he was

"Coming! Oh, Hermione, oh *fuck me*, I'm going to come in your mouth-" Severus howled his ecstasy into the room, a series of inarticulate rapturous cries. Hermione rose onto her knees, and wrapped her arms around his back, pulling his spurting, spraying cock deeper into her mouth, drinking him down as if *he* were the lust potion; as if *he* were the delicious confection to be consumed. She moaned deliriously, the vibrations sending tremours through him that caused his knees to buckle. He saw red stars shooting across his closed eyelids. When he staggered back, both Hermione and Ginny caught him, sweat-drenched and flushed, and the three of them fell gracelessly back onto the sofa, panting.

Severus opened his eyes, and met the sweet, warm brown orbs of his lover, and she gasped in surprise. He smiled then, and she feverishly pressed her lips to his, and he tasted himself in her mouth. She gently ended the kiss, her mouth still brushing his. "I've never really seen you smile before. It's such a beautiful smile." He rewarded her by repeating it.

On his other side, Ginny gazed at both of them, her eyes dark with arousal and something more. "Sit on his lap," she murmured. Hermione smiled as she obeyed, moving into his arms. "No, the other way," Ginny commanded, "facing me."

Severus met her flashing eyes and understood. He quietly but firmly turned Hermione around, so that she was seated in his lap, facing outward, straddling his legs, her back pressed against his chest.

Ginny slid from the sofa to the floor at their feet. As Severus draped Hermione's thighs over his, Ginny laughed softly. "You need to recover, but I want to enjoy myself while you do." Her hands coaxed Severus to widen his stance, forcing Hermione's thighs apart, while his large hands cupped her breasts, gently kneading the soft flesh, tugging and milking her candy-hard nipples. Hermione moaned, her head falling back on his shoulder. Ginny leaned forward, enraptured by the sight. The two lovers looked so perfect together; her mouth was watering. She was staggered at the sensuality of Severus' adoration of Hermione's body. She realised that, in his dreams, he must have made love to Hermione many times.

Hermione whimpered as Severus' hands slid down her belly to her thighs, fondling her labia. He enticingly slid his fingers through them, and gently parted them to expose her further to Ginny, who looked up at him. Their eyes met, and she could see he was enjoying this enjoying watching her touching his love. With a voice soft and sweetly seductive, Severus purred to Hermione, "There, my love. Just relax, and enjoy," but his eyes were locked with Ginny's. She slid her hands up the insides of Hermione's thighs to the treasure that Snape so provocatively presented to her.

Ginny's tongue traced a long, leisurely trail from Severus' balls to the base of his cock, to Hermione's swollen, pink clit. The two lovers cried out together as she repeated the journey, her tongue firmer and more aggressive. Snape began to move, to rock Hermione against him, and Ginny felt his pace settle in.

She moved with him, savouring the sweetness of Hermione's juices in counterpoint to Severus' musky, salty taste. Together they were delicious. Ginny's head spun as she raised up on her knees and pressed against them. She hooked her arms under both sets of thighs and drank deeply from Hermione, rubbing against her clit the way she knew Hermione loved. She slid her slender fingers into the tight passage while Severus' fingers returned to his lover's beautiful breasts, gently rolling, teasing her taut nipples. He could feel Hermione shuddering, her hands fluttered helplessly up to his hair, and she whispered his name, her voice urgent and strained.

As Ginny laved the aching clit, Hermione felt her body giving in, climbing that impossible hill, trembling, and she felt her friend's soft, insistent tongue, and her lover's warm, long fingers. An all-encompassing bliss flooded her body and her back arched as she felt Ginny's mouth close over her clit and suck insistently while Severus' fingers flicked against her nipples, and with that, she came, *hard*, screaming a desperate wail of pleasure that gave voice to a climax painful in its intensity. She could dimly hear Severus urging her on, his voice low and rasping, telling her things, calling her things she'd never heard before and wondered how she'd lived without.

Ginny sat back on her heels, licking her lips, a satisfied smile on her pretty face. Her eyes caught Severus' and she sighed, a sound of great satisfaction. "Believe me, Snape," she whispered, "you are going to enjoy doing that every bit as much as I did." She looked into his lean, saturnine face, his fierce dark eyes, and a wave of affection washed over her. "And she's going to love you doing it."

Gasping, Hermione collapsed back onto Severus' warm chest. His delicious scent filled her nostrils; his clean aftershave, mingled with his own personal heat and scent, were intoxicating, and Hermione's head swam with the knowledge that her best friend and her lover were here, and she was pinned between them, sated and *home*. It was such a wonderful feeling that tears of joy pricked her eyes.

Severus put his arms around her waist, pulled her close and cradled her to his body. She could feel his erection, now eager and ready, pressing against the cleft of her bottom. "I want you now," he said, plaintively. "I want to bury myself in you." He gently urged her onto her feet, and as he stood, he picked her up as easily as one would a child. As he crossed the room, she clung to him, and he could feel her lips against the soft skin of his earlobe.

He turned and looked at Ginny, who had picked up her discarded jacket from the floor and was retrieving something from one of the pockets. An unspoken message passed between them, and she said, "I'll be right there." As she passed the table, she shrugged, and picked up the chocolates and carried them with her.

It was an afternoon the three of them would never forget a chocolate-fueled, heat-infused moment in time that seemed both dreamlike and crystal clear. In those hazy, lust-filled hours, Severus learned exactly what pegging was, pinned between the two women, filling Hermione with his aching cock, being filled by Ginny's strap-on.

At first, he'd been hesitant, but Ginny was gently insistent and prepared him well. There was a brief moment of fear as the phallus eased into the unfurling bud of his virgin rectum, but as she gently moved in him, the sensation changed from one of burning discomfort to one of intense sensation. The dildo found his prostate and nudged it sinuously in time with his own thrusts. An unspeakable pleasure blazed white hot and urgent throughout his groin, and he thought he might not survive the orgasm that was speeding through him like the Hogwarts Express. As he drove hard into her, he cried, "Oh fuck, Hermione... girl, come with me... I can't stop it!"

Hermione, seeing his open and vulnerable expression, his eyes glassy with rapture, his mouth an astonished O of pleasure, grabbed his hair and cried, "Yesss... oh fuck, yes, Severus, don't stop... you can't stop yet *Ginny, fuck him harder!*"

He growled in ecstasy as Ginny obeyed, her strong hands holding onto his hips. He grasped Hermione's shoulders and drove into her harder than he could ever remember, as if he was trying to punish her with his fucking. It had taken only five more merciless thrusts before she screamed her release, and he came so hard he actually lost consciousness. He awoke between two very concerned witches, who were somewhat taken aback when he began laughing like a loon. He pulled them both into his arms and kissed them fervently.

Ginny gave Hermione the strap-on as a present.

Later, lying on his back as Hermione rode his very happy cock with a slow, undulating grind, he reached for Ginny, and gently guided her onto his waiting mouth. "Oh, yes!" Hermione had moaned, and he felt her delicious pussy grip his cock. "Merlin, Severus, you two look so fucking hot!" He felt Ginny lean forward, toward Hermione, and heard his lover moan deliriously as her lips found Ginny's, and the younger woman began to writhe against his tongue. Her taste was different, and lovely, and even as his lover rode his cock, Ginny cried out, and Severus was bathed in her sweet juices as she climaxed against his mouth.

Breathless, Ginny rose from the bed, and kissed Severus deeply, a loud, smacking kiss full of playful impertinence. She stood by the side of the bed and kissed Hermione again. Hermione set a new pace, riding his cock frantically. Ginny's fingers danced over Hermione's clit, and she lowered her mouth to suck at the taut nipples. Watching the two women, Severus felt his own orgasm blistering through him, and he reared up into his lover, like the rising wave on the sea. Hermione cried out, caught between the twin pleasures of Ginny's hands and Severus' body, and she grasped Severus' offered hand like a lifeline to sanity.

"Severus! Oh gods, yesyesyes..." Hermione keened ecstatically, as she felt the sweet, hot release of her orgasm rush through her. Looking down into Severus' face, she watched as his grimace of rapture turned into a look of absolute, perfect delight, and she rode that last wave with him almost gently, as they came together; two lost souls, found and loved and loving one another.

Breathless and exhausted, Severus drew Hermione down into his arms, crooning beautiful words of love and comfort. She lay against him, kissing him with lips that were soft and warm and *home*.

Ginny stood beside the bed, her eyes shining. When Severus held out his hand to her, she climbed in beside him with a contented sigh. The three of them drifted off, sated and peaceful in each other's arms.

As the afternoon waned into the evening, and the shadows grew long across the Headmaster's massive bed chamber, Ginny quietly rose and dressed. She glanced at her two friends lovingly, feeling a sense of accomplishment. Hermione lay asleep in Severus' arms, looking contented and beautiful. She was golden and glowing, as bright as the sun. Severus had his arms around her protectively, and even he looked pleased with himself. He was pale and sleepy, as silvery as the moon. They truly looked as if they'd been magically created for one another.

Severus opened his fathomless eyes and looked up at Ginny complacently. She blew him a kiss and said quietly, "I'm going to let myself out, Snape. Tell Hermione I'll call her in a few days."

He looked at her fondly. His voice was gravelly, and all the more alluring for it. "I knew, Ginevra."

She stopped and looked back. "Knew what?"

He preened a bit, and as Hermione stirred, he kissed her forehead and stretched. "Yesterday, I received a very unexpected Floo call. From George."

Ginny looked intrigued. "Really?" she said slowly. "And?"

His smirk was textbook Snape. "Very protective of you, is your brother. While he agreed with your desire to see Hermione and me reveal our true feelings for one another, he didn't want you to incur my ire. Nor did he want Hermione to be hurt." He gave her a reproachful look that was almost playful. "Really, Ginevra, who do you think created the formula for the Certainty Potion? I hold the patent. But I suppose dear George didn't mention that part?"

Both Hermione and Ginny were watching him closely now. He turned to Hermione. "I ate the chocolate because I wanted to tell you the truth, without stumbling over my own insecurities. I knew it would only react for you if you had any true feelings for me." For the first time since his disclosure, Ginny thought he looked uncertain. "You will forgive me, won't you?"

Hermione looked at him carefully. Finally, she burrowed back against his chest. "You really are the Slytherin's Slytherin, aren't you, Severus?"

Ginny grinned. "I take that as a yes."

Severus, looking profoundly relieved, lay back, his smug smile returning. "Indeed."

Ginny almost left then, but she couldn't. "I have another little confession, Snape."

"Oh?" He didn't sound particularly concerned.

"Yes. You see, I know that George Floo'd you yesterday. I was there with him."

Severus' eyes narrowed. "I fail to see-"

"Double-blind, Snape. I never put the potions in the chocolates." It was Ginny's turn to look smug. Both Hermione and Severus looked at her in shock. "Merlin, your faces!" she laughed, plucking the last chocolate pyramid from the box. She pointed it at them and wagged her finger. "You two are running on nothing more than pure air and cocoa solids. Nary a potion in sight."

Hermione laughed. "Ginny, you really are devious."

Snape shook his head in wonder. "And she called me the Slytherin's Slytherin."

Hermione smiled fondly at the younger woman. Her eyes were soft. "I love you, Gin." She looked at Severus, and Ginny could see the gratitude in her heart. "Thank you."

Snape gazed back at Ginny. "Well, Ginevra, not many can boast of deceiving Severus Snape about a potion and getting away with it. Don't brag too much. I do have a reputation, you know."

Ginny nodded. "Perhaps you wanted it badly enough to be deceived."

Snape regarded her solemnly. "All I wanted was to make her happy." He looked down at Hermione, lying contentedly in his arms. "I just wanted the chance to show her how much she meant to me, and I dared to hope she would feel the same."

Ginny nodded, then grabbed her coat and gave the couple in bed a last, little wave. "Get rested, then get shagging. You two have to make up for a lot of lost time."

As she left the room, she could hear Snape's voice, low and sensuous, and Hermione's answering coo. Ginny smiled, and popped the last chocolate into her mouth.

~~oOo~~

Six Months Later

The Christmastide wedding of Hogwarts' Headmaster Severus Tobias Snape (OoM, 1st, etc) to Hermione Jean Granger (OoM, 1st, etc.) ~~was~~*the* last official reunion of the Order of the Phoenix. Headmaster Snape toasted the wedding guests with the warning that "the next time someone mentions a bloody reunion, I'm going to hex first and ask questions later. Let's move on." His suggestion was met with a resounding "hear-hear"s from former Order members, now merely close friends.

Hermione stood beside her husband, stunning in her green Christmas robes, trimmed in ermine. Severus looked equally resplendent in black velvet, trimmed in sable, his black hair gleaming in the light. Ginny's companion leaned over and whispered in her ear, "Gods, I knew your friend was lovely, but the groom really is something else, isn't he? I've never seen anyone who looked so dramatic just standing in place."

Laughing, Ginny retorted, "You have *no* idea. He used to terrify us when we were kids. But I'll grant you, he knows how to make an impression." She gave her friend an appraising look. "You should see him in full billow."

"Billow?"

Ginny's explanation was cut short when Hermione spotted her and waved her over. Severus looked from Ginny to her guest and back again, and awarded her with an expression that almost looked impressed.

Smiling, Ginny gestured to her friends. "Hermione, Severus, I'd like you to meet-"

"We're not so buried here in Scotland that we don't recognise your companion, Ginevra," Snape interrupted smoothly. He turned to the companion in question and offered his hand. "Severus Snape, Headmaster of Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry, at your service." To both Ginny's and Hermione's surprise, he kissed the offered hand with a courtly air. "My wife and I have followed your rising star for quite some time, Miss."

Hermione grinned at the handsome American witch, dressed in a Muggle-style tuxedo and Chuck Taylor trainers, and they exchanged a peck on the cheek. "I still can't believe that Ariel Dexter is attending my wedding!"

The Cranford Cronies' star seeker bowed slightly. "Ginny tells me this is Wizarding Britain's wedding of the decade, so how could I refuse?" She looked at Ginny and put her arm around her. "When she asked me to accompany her, I was thrilled."

"Indeed," Severus said, and placed a kiss on his wife's curly head. "Please enjoy the evening, and know you are always welcome to visit us at Hogwarts." He turned back to Hermione, and she returned his kiss eagerly.

As Ginny and Ariel moved away, Ginny gestured over her date's shoulder and mouthed *Isn't she gorgeous?* Hermione giggled, and even Snape smirked, a smile tugging at the corners of his mouth.

"Oh, by the way, Ginevra," he called out, and Hermione looked up at him questioningly. When Ginny turned back, Severus nodded over at the refreshment table. "Do try the chocolates. Honeyduke's Dark Finest, you know." Ginny's laughter floated toward them pleasantly.

"Of course," Severus said to his new bride, pulling her into his arms, "I hope she realises that once you eat one, you can't stop. They're amazingly moreish."

Hermione smiled, and breathed in the scent of her husband. "Like you, love. Just like you."

FIN

There. I hope you enjoyed this strange little fic. I'm not sure I met the objectives, but I really, really wanted to.