

How Hermione Got Her Groove Back

by Dreamy_Dragon

Hermione thinks she's failing, but sometimes one needs a little help - even from an unexpected source

One

Chapter 1 of 1

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Hermione slunk into the office, trying to sneak past Snape's open door. Predictably, it didn't work.

'Miss Granger, Edith just rang. Apparently they're still missing your article on the effects of transformative spells on the efficiency of Blood-Replenishing Potion,' Snape's voice informed her.

She could practically picture his raised eyebrow. Which, truth be told, she found rather endearing. The raised eyebrow. Not picturing it.

'Miss Granger?' This time, Snape stuck his head round the door.

Hermione realised that she had just missed every chance to reach her desk unnoticed. 'Erm, yes. The article is more or less done. I just thought I'd test my hypothesis again.'

'After testing it how many times?' There was no need to picture Snape's expression now; it was right in front of her.

'You wouldn't want me to publish an untested hypothesis, would you?'

Snape harrumphed. 'There is such a thing as an overtested hypothesis.'

'And there are a few references I still need to check,' Hermione added quickly.

'Fine. I'll inform Edith that she'll have the article the day after tomorrow.' The door to Snape's office closed with a firm "click".

Hermione shuffled to her own desk. Pulling out the article from her briefcase, she started to look it over one more time. The beginning was good. Catchy opening line leading to an intelligent question followed by a proposition.

The hand reaching for her mug came up empty. She had forgotten to fetch her usual tea on the way to her desk. Couldn't be helped now. She concentrated again on the article. The argument was deteriorating in the middle, and the conclusion was mediocre at best -- if not downright sloppy. This couldn't be published. Under any circumstances. Not only would it make her the laughing stock of Charms research, it would also severely damage the reputation of *MS Magipotions Ltd.* What had she been thinking?

Hermione was so completely lost in her self-deprecating thoughts that she missed the dark shadow looming over her desk. Her head shot up when a plate with sandwiches and a steaming mug appeared in front of her.

'I believe it's past lunchtime.'

'Really, I haven't got the time,' she protested.

'Fine.' The plate and the mug vanished.

On second thought, lunch wouldn't have been such a bad idea. Not that she was going to tell Snape that. And why was he still standing there, staring down his nose at the parchments and books strewn all over her desk?

'You know, I'm surprised at you.' He observed matter-of-factly.

'Oh?'

'Aren't Gryffindors supposed to be brave?'

'What's that supposed to mean?'

A sweeping gesture indicated the paper mess.

Hermione refused to take the bait. 'This has nothing to do with being Gryffindor; I just like to be thorough in my research. Now, if you don't mind, I'd like to get on with it.'

'Hm.' Snape stalked off in a cloud of billowing robes.

She stared after him. Some things just never changed. The billowing somehow suited him, though. Hermione concentrated on her article again, completely oblivious to everything around her.

"Flump!" An old issue of *Charms Research Quarterly* fell down right in front of her, flipped open.

Hermione looked at the page and felt all colour drain from her face. Nausea spread upwards from her stomach until a knot of bile was firmly lodged in her throat. How had he found that? *That* article and the disparaging responses right underneath it. The article she had published a few years ago -- right at the time when she'd just failed to get a promotion at the Ministry, and just after she and Ron had split up. Not that that had interfered with her writing, but she had been sort of distracted, and as the responses had correctly pointed out, her references and the foundation for her hypothesis had been shoddy at best.

'This is what all this is about, isn't it?' Snape asked.

'Of course not. I'm a professional, I can take criticism.'

'Criticism would mean that the people who wrote the responses had any idea what they were talking about in the first place. Also, as a professional, I'm sure you've also seen these.'

Three more back-issues of the journal landed on her desk. Hermione pulled them towards her, her heart beating rapidly as she started to read. All three of them were responses to the response, defending *her* original argument and proving her right.

When she'd finished reading, something wet was leaking from her eyes, and the weight of years upon her shoulders seemed to have dissolved. She suddenly felt light and competent. She quickly wiped the wetness from her face.

Within an hour she had finished her article. Performing a freshening charm on her robes and tucking an errant curl back into her bun, she made her way to Snape's office. As she raised her hand to knock, the strand of hair had already made a bid for freedom again.

When she had handed him the role of parchment, Snape said, 'About time.'

Hermione nodded. 'Yes. And thank you.'

She turned to leave.

'Miss Granger?'

'Yes?' She turned back.

'Now that you've finally finished the damn thing, perhaps we could discuss your article over dinner?'

Hermione beamed at him. 'Yes, I'd love that.'

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Written for linlawless' prompt "Hermione's refusal to stop dithering and submit her article for publication irritates her supervisor – Snape. How does he get her to stop?"