

# Luscious Red Riding Hood

*by ladyofthemasque*

Lotm's own entry into the Lost In A Book Challenge.

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*Chapter 1 of 2*

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*Author's Notes: Yup, it's the Lost In A Book Challenge! I do try to answer my own challenges, and since I did post this one... Challenge rules are listed at the end of the story. Enjoy! ~Lotm*

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### CHAPTER ONE

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Hermione bit back a squeal when she saw the package sitting for her on the breakfast table, delivered no doubt by an owl while she was still getting dressed for the day. The sight of it nearly curled her toes with joy. She covered her mouth, but her gasp had already drawn attention from her companion. Exonerated from his crimes and pardoned from Azkaban via testimony from Albus Dumbledore's ghost, Severus Snape had been released back into wizarding society...and had found his way here, to sharing a breakfast table with his former know-it-all student.

Unfortunately, wizarding society hadn't wanted to hire such a notorious ex-Death Eater, even if it was due mostly to his efforts as a spy that they'd managed to uncover all of the Horcruxes. No one else wanted to acknowledge that without Snape's assistance, Harry, Ron and Hermione would not have been able to locate Voldemort at a moment when he was vulnerable enough for Harry to take out in a messy, mutual kill. Even if Snape had wreaked havoc with some rather nastily inventive sabotage, distracting and felling most of the other Death Eaters just so that Harry could have his chance at killing the Dark Lord...no one wanted him around, socially.

But then, Hermione wasn't most of wizarding society. Harry had named her his heir after her parents had died in a Death Eater raid, and though she'd mourned both his and Ron's loss at the very end of the war, eventually she had recovered, picked herself up, and moved on with her life. A life that had delved into research, since she had calculated that there was enough funds between her parents' estate and Harry's--plumped not only by the Potters' coffers, but Sirius Black's--that she could do private experimentations for the betterment of wizard-kind. If she lived frugally until the patent money started flowing, that was, and so long as she had some patents flowing within twenty years. Well, within twelve years, now that she'd stocked the house with necessary equipment and a plethora of books.

When she realized she needed assistance, there was only one logical choice: who better to hire as her potions-researcher than an ex-potions professor?

Unfortunately, as his home had been raided and then "accidentally" destroyed by the Ministry during the war, she had to share 12 Grimmauld Place with him. The worst part in the arrangement for both of them had turned out to be losing most of his library to the Ministry's raid and subsequent destruction. Hermione had discreetly bought replacements for about half of his missing library based on his recollections and her extensive contacts among wizarding booksellers around the world. She considered it an investment well worth their efforts, though it had forced her when contemplating their budget afterwards to focus more quickly on money-making sorts of research, as opposed to the pure academic curiosity sort.

Aside from some general awkwardness between two strong-minded housemates who weren't adverse to being snarky and/or bossy, they had eventually learned to get

along. As part of his 'rent'--being stubborn about not wanting to accept charity--Snape was slowly but steadily un-sticking the Permanently Stuck items from the walls of their shared domicile via his research. In fact, the solution he had come up with to dissolve the magical binding had been licensed for commercial production, and was pulling in a tidy little income pipeline already, though they had only been collaborating for about five months, now. It wasn't quite enough yet to pay the expenses for their research, though the income did pay the regular bills.

Mrs. Black's too-noisy portrait had been the first to go, of course. The hideous house-elf heads--including Kreacher's, somehow self-bespelled to be mounted over the kitchen door the moment the twisted, vile creature had died--were also gone, and Severus was slowly but steadily working on peeling away the huge Black family tapestry. He didn't work on it every day, just on Saturdays, but it was on his list of things to do around the house since today was a Saturday.

Hermione had a different list for her Saturday chores, and it was primarily filled with cooking. Though they did occasionally snark and sneer and shout at each other, the two of them often buried themselves quite happily in their work. Stopping to fix an entire meal thrice a day was tedious, so Hermione had come up with the idea of pre-made dinners.

Breakfast was cooked every day, and the kettle put on for afternoon tea, but lunch and supper were a case of grabbing something from the spelled-storage cupboard, zapping it with a Warming Charm, and canceling the stasis-spell keeping it fresh for up to two weeks at a time. Provided she cooked all of the necessary food beforehand, of course, it was as quick and convenient as a microwave oven, without the concomitant loss of nutrients and taste. Thankfully, after a few anticipatory sneers, her housemate had proclaimed her cooking skills 'acceptably edible'--high praise, coming from the surly, uptight bastard--and had willingly traded off 'ugly eyesore removal' duties with her in exchange for not having to cook anything. Hermione didn't know what she'd make him do on Saturdays when the last travesty of Black family pride was gone, but the house was old and in need of repairs; perhaps an upgrade to the kitchen facilities would be in order.

But this, her long-anticipated package, put such mundane considerations as chores entirely on hold. Hermione touched the name on the return-address, *L. Lovegood*, and longed to tear open the plain brown paper immediately. She refrained, however. Doing so in front of her ex-professor didn't exactly appeal to her.

They'd finally relaxed out of the teacher-student roles they'd known for far too long, and had even made it past the awkward you're-too-young-and-inexperienced-to-be-my-boss-even-if-you-are-my-employer stage. Hermione hoped fervently she wasn't the only one who considered what they had to be a sort of intellectually compatible friendship...but they didn't have the sort of tell-each-other-anything friendship she'd had with the boys. This was one of those tell-each-other-anything packages, and she blushed with an awkward sort of discomfort at the thought of telling him what Luna Lovegood had asked her to do.

"Is there any particular reason why you're gasping over and fondling a lump of paper, Hermione?" his gravelly baritone interjected. "I presume from the way you're petting that thing, that it isn't dangerous?"

"Er..." Blushing, Hermione scooped up her long-anticipated delivery and looked around for a place to hide it. She *really* didn't want to answer that particular question in his presence.

"*Accio* package."

"--What? Severus, give that back!" Hermione demanded, flustered at how he'd just snatched it magically out of her hands.

Arching a brow at her, he tapped the package with his wand. Nothing happened. No doubt he had just checked it for Dark curses; the man was rather paranoid, at times. His other brow lifted, and he tapped it again silently. This time, the string unknotted itself and the paper unfurled with crinkling noises. Lowering brows indicated his confusion as he stared at the smallish tome that lay within. "...A book?"

Hermione rose from her chair, intending to retrieve it before he read whatever activation charm Luna had supplied. She'd forgotten to bring her wand downstairs with her, and the kitchen table was just a little too big to just lean across and snatch it back. Before she could stop him however, he opened the cover, flipped through the pages...and froze in place.

Eyes widening, Hermione hurried around the end of the table, but jerked back before she could touch the book, too. He really *wasn't* moving. No blinking, no twitching...no breathing. A quick press of her fingers discovered he still had a heartbeat, however. This wasn't a true stasis spell.

This was bad.

Whirling, she fumbled in the Floo Pot for a fistful of powder, and cast it onto the hearth, dropping to her knees. "Luna Lovegood's Loft!"

The embers blazed with emerald fire, Hermione felt a dizzy, spinning sensation, a jolt, and opened her eyes. The blue-eyed blond was lounging on her sofa, reading a book. Thankfully, she was moving and turning a page, and not frozen or anything herself.

"Luna!"

The slightly younger witch started and nearly rolled off the cushions as she twisted to face the fire. "Oh--Hermione! Did you get it?"

"Yes, I did, but someone else got to it first! And he's not blinking, or breathing, or anything!"

Luna smiled at her. Hermione eyed her warily, not trusting that cat-licked-the-cream-covered-canary smile. "Don't worry. He's just waiting for the book to start. If he's waiting for someone to join him, though, you'd better have them join up quick."

"What do you mean?" Hermione demanded.

"I mean, I decided to design the book for couples. The plot *is* a variation on 'Red Riding Hood', after all...and you can't have a Red Riding Hood without a Big Bad Wolf," the Ravenclaw winked. "So, who's the lucky lover you get to play Red for, hmm?"

"Luna, it's *Shape* who opened the book, and he didn't *know* it was the magical equivalent of a holographic novel!" Hermione protested. "He just took it out of my hands, opened it up, and now he is stuck in there! What's the exit command?"

"Exit command? Hermione, it only takes an hour at most to finish out the storyline," Luna protested. "I didn't bother to put in an 'exit command'!"

"Yes, and you didn't bother to put in *anyother* patently obvious safety-features, like a spell that *prevents* the book's action from happening until after the reader has read *all* of the book's rules and verbal commands!" Hermione retorted.

"Well...it's only the beta version!" Sighing, Luna shrugged. "Okay, so I didn't consider some beaky-nosed git grabbing the book and having a peek, but really, I made the painting on the dust-jacket as lurid as could be, and still be decent!"

Hermione extracted her head just far enough to peer over her shoulder at the table. The dust jacket had unfolded itself right along with the rest of the wrapping paper. Poking her head back into the flames, she ignored the dizzy feeling. "...Let's just say he never saw the dust-jacket. How do I get him out of there?"

"You wait until he finishes the story--I'll put in lots more safety features in the next version!" Luna swore, lifting one hand into the air and placing the other over her head. "I swear! But you're just going to have to wait until he gets out. I did design it for either a male, a female, or a couple to go through."

"And in the meantime, he's not breathing!" Hermione reminded her semi-dotty, semi-brilliant friend.

"He'll start breathing as soon as he or his partner chooses which role to play, either Red or the Wolf!"

Hermione, paling, blurted, "Luna, he doesn't *know* he has to pick a character!--Is there a safety feature *for that* aspect? Something to allow him to keep living if it takes more than a minute or two for him to decide or for someone to join and decide for him?"

Luna's large blue eyes widened even further. "...Uh-oh."

--Bye!"

Visions of being hauled before the Wizengamot for suffocating her housemate via an experimental book-charm made Hermione scramble out of the fireplace. She knew the book was activated by being seated, touching the cover, and reading the writing on the pages; that much of a safety-feature was already built into the novel. But there were no chairs on that side of the table, and by her calculation, she'd already wasted nearly two minutes. He looked a bit glassy-eyed and blue-lipped, scaring her.

Showing the table back, Hermione grimaced and squirmed sideways onto his lap, then grabbed the book and looked at the runes inscribed on its pages, wishing herself firmly into the role of 'Red', and Severus firmly into the role of 'Wolf'. Two things happened simultaneously: he gasped deeply, spasming under the weight of her body as he struggled for air; and the book yanked her into its plotline with a sudden descent of darkness, and an unfurling of light. Hermione only hoped he would be cooperative about fulfilling the book's exit requirements, and that they could get through the necessary scenes with a minimum of embarrassment and awkwardness, in the next hour or so.

Namely, because she knew this enchanted holo-novel had been planned and written as a ruddy erotic romance!

## CHAPTER TWO

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Hermione found herself standing in the kitchen of 12 Grimmauld Place in a tight, knee-length red dress that showed off her curves from thighs to cleavage. She wore low-heeled ankle boots, and her hair was swept up in a French twist. Around her, food covered every conceivable horizontal surface around her, even the chairs clustered around the table. There were more than the three chairs she and Severus usually kept out, in case they had someone drop by for company, too.

And there, right before her, sat a basket covered with a napkin. A peek underneath showed Hermione that it was filled with a plethora of finger-foods for two, including oysters on the enspelled half-shell, their liqueur carefully constrained against spilling. Someone came into the kitchen and she hastily covered the basket again.

It was Molly Weasley. And she was smiling. Which was a little disturbing, because Hermione knew Molly still hadn't quite forgiven her for living when Ron, Harry, Charlie, and Ginny had all died in the final battle.

"Now remember, dearie, to take those goodies straight through the woods to your grandmother, and don't linger on the way--and don't talk to any strangers, either! Take your cloak, too, since it looks like it might rain."

Knowing she had to get going if she was to encounter Snape and get both of them out of this mess, Hermione fetched the bright Gryffindor-red cloak from the nearby cloak stand, draping it over her shoulders and fastening the throat-clasp. She picked up the basket, and left through the back door. Strangely enough, the tiny veg patch outside of 12 Grimmauld Place was instead replaced with the bigger veg garden behind the Burrow...which had somehow moved itself right next to the Forbidden Forest.

Apparently, the book was enchanted to use locations that she herself knew to flesh out its settings. Hermione thought this was rather clever of Luna, and admired it for a moment as she followed the path into the forest. Until she heard a cursing sound, and the breaking of branches, and saw Severus stumbling out onto the path, swiping at a couple of leaves that had somehow lodged in his hair.

Said hair--having grown out to chest-length after the end of the war and being sadly in need of a trim that he just hadn't gotten around to, yet--had been washed and dried and pulled back into a ponytail by the book. An earring glinted from one lobe, and silver studs accented the leather of his skin-tight, laced-on, black dragon-hide trousers and matching, waist-length, black dragon-hide jacket. He had on black dragon-hide boots, too, that clung to his calves...but no shirt underneath the open folds of that jacket.

Severus Snape was skinny and sallow-skinned, yes...but the man clearly also had a bit of muscle on him. Hermione ogled those muscles. She didn't mean to stare, but she just couldn't help herself.

They'd very carefully arranged their lives and interactions over the last five months to ensure the absolute bare minimum of male-female-ness. His quarters were on the second floor, and he used the second-floor bathroom. Hers were on the first floor, and she used the first-floor bathroom. Both of them moved about the house fully dressed; even in the summer months, they went fully clothed, with Cooling Charms applied to their clothes when and where necessary. Frankly, it was too dangerous to work on potions and such with a lot of bare skin showing, as some of the ingredients and their combinations could be quite caustic, even toxic.

So this was the absolute most of Severus Snape's pallid hide she had ever seen. It was only a strip of skin about as wide as her palm, but it was male skin...and he had a treasure-line. The tight, low-slung trousers the book had given him didn't quite cover his hip-bones, so she could see a couple inches below his navel as well as above it. The fine, sparse, black hairs coalesced about a finger-length above his navel and marched in a path straight down into the waistband and fly region. It dragged her gaze from his chest and abdomen down to his groin...where the leather, though tight, was butter-soft enough to cup his genitals. His rather reasonably endowed genitals.

A stray thought made Hermione bite her lip against the urge to giggle: Ron had once claimed in a moment of frustration that their Potions Professor had to have a small prick physically, to be such a big prick in his personality. *But it just isn't so*, she thought, blushing as he straightened himself out and glared at her, yanking the folds of his jacket closed. *It just isn't so...*

"Damnit, Hermione, what the hell is going on, here? And why are you dressed like a Gryffindor tart?" he demanded. Her amusement vanished, evaporating under the insult. His next words mollified her somewhat, but only somewhat. "You normally have the good taste to dress like a lady!"

Setting her basket down, Hermione planted her hands on her hips. She knew that flared the cape, exposing more of her outfit than just a glimpse of her cleavage, but didn't care. "*This* is your punishment for grabbing and looking at a book that was not yours!"

"My *punishment*? To have me dressed up like some middle-age-crisised, Harley-Davidson-riding, leather-fetished idiot, and to see you dressed like a...like a... What exactly *is* going on, anyway?" he bit out, thankfully censoring a more detailed observation of her attire. He yanked again at the jacket, which refused to stay closed; apparently it was an insistence on the part of the book to leave that tantalizing strip of skin distractingly bared. His hand started to sweep through his hair in a gesture of impatient confusion, but was thwarted by the band holding it in a tail. Yanking it out, he demanded, "Where are we, why are we dressed like this, what are you doing with that hand-basket--why are you dressed like Little Red Riding Hood, with a basket and a red cape and everything?"

"It's not exactly 'Little Red Riding Hood'," Hermione corrected him briskly, not sure if she liked him better with his hair pulled back in that new style, or like this, with it hanging free in the old familiar it usually hung, half-obscuring his features.. "If anything, the book probably comes with a title more like 'Luscious Red Riding Hood'. But I don't know for sure, because you grabbed the book out of my hands and didn't bother to stop and read the dust jacket when you unwrapped it!"

He blinked at her, shocked, as she continued.

"And we're in an experimental holo-novel, a creation of Luna Lovegood's that I promised to beta-test for her. *This*," and she gestured with one hand at the woods around them, "is a book enchanted to draw the reader into a fantasy setting, to experience a plotline with all of the senses. It takes place entirely inside the mind, while the body is busy sitting in a chair somewhere.

"Unfortunately, it's still in the experimental stage. Luna neglected to add a few safety-controls that we both now realize are absolutely necessary...like a feature where you aren't drawn into the book until you've read all of the rules, the general plotline, and agree of your own free will to join the novel's storyline," she sighed roughly. "Or a

safety-feature like a release-word to jolt us back out of here before the book is done.

"Or a feature where, if you don't know what the book is about, and don't know that you're supposed to join a character, it will not *uffocate* you!" she snarled, still angry with Luna for that particular oversight. "And while we're in here, even if you're not here by choice, remind me to yell at her for not including a legally-an-adult-or-older-only clause--because it *could've* been a child who snatched away the book!"

"This is a Luna Lovegood idea?" he demanded, gesturing at the forest around them. "Recreating a Muggle fairy-tale? One, I remind you, that was based upon an actual werewolf serial-rapist and -killer of the 1700's, who went around seducing innocent village maids on evenings of the full moon, luring them into a cottage in the woods where he would *fuck* them until moonrise, and then transform and *eat* his sexually sated prey?"

She shook her head quickly. She knew Luna far too well, and knew Luna's goals for this particular project. They'd discussed it often enough in the last three months, when they met twice weekly for their Girls' Night Out on Wednesdays and Sundays. "No, the plotline is only *based* upon the tale. Loosely, at that. I already discussed the plotline with her; she may have messed up the access spells big-time, but the plotline is, erm...innocuous enough...for a romance novel."

The horrified look he gave her was so wide-eyed, she could see white all the way around his black irises. "A *what?!'*

"The book is supposed to be a romance, not a horror story. It's a tale of seduction--*erotic* seduction," she emphasized, hands on her hips once again as he gaped at her. "You were the one who snatched it away from me! You were the one who opened it up without permission. You should've *asked* what this was, rather than just grabbing and taking it! You now have to suffer the consequences of your actions, Severus Snape, because Luna stupidly didn't put in an early-exit feature! That's right: we have to play out the whole of the plotline, before the book will release us back into the real world," she confirmed, gesturing sharply between the two of them. "The *whole* plotline--and this goody-basket has oysters on the half-shell in it!"

It was a strange sight, seeing the normally composed, acerbic wizard blushing. He even looked like he'd accidentally swallowed a baby flobberworm. A disconcerted mumble escaped him as he ran one hand over his loosened hair; it fell back into place, sheltering his face in a fall of coal black strands. "I'm allergic to shellfish..."

"Well, we don't *have* to eat those. But we *do* have to play out the erotic plotline to its conclusion."

For a moment, she thought he looked like he might faint. But a deep breath, a couple rapid blinks, and he squared his shoulders. "And what, exactly, is the plotline?"

"Well, it's based on Red Riding Hood. Given I have the title role, I'm on my way to Grandmother's House with a basket of goodies. I meet you in the forest, since I selected you to play the part of the Big Bad Wolf. We walk together a ways, flirt heavily, then you race on ahead to get rid of Gran."

"I don't have to eat her, do I?" he asked, looking disconcerted. "Gustatorially, or...or *sexually?*"

Hermione shuddered. If her own 'mother' was Mrs. Weasley, she could only imagine that 'Gran' was Minerva McGonagall, or someone like that. "Uh, no. If I remember Luna's outline for the story, you have an envelope with hotel reservations and a Portkey ticket to Cancun for Gran in your pocket, whoever she is--and just to warn you, the book is pulling images out of your memories for the setting, and the images of people you know, too."

He closed his eyes for a moment. "Just so long as it isn't Irma Pince in a frilly nightgown, I can handle it...though Minerva's tartan flannel would be almost as bad." A check of his pockets allowed him to discover an envelope with the necessary items. Both of them relaxed. A little. Severus ran his hand through his hair distractedly. "So...I go ahead of you, pack 'Gran' off to a Mexican vacation, and then... Do I have to don a frilly night-robe?"

"Not as far as I know. But you do need to set the scene for seduction... Remind me to yell at Luna about putting in some sort of 'help' charm, or a 'table of contents', something to summarize each chapter-scene to help guide the readers. Something the reader can access at any point in time, if they're uncertain about what to do next," she muttered half to herself.

"Do I have to spout those silly nursery-book rhymes, about how my eyes are all the bigger to see you, and my teeth...?" He stopped with an odd look of discomfort, shifting his stance abruptly. That drew Hermione's gaze to his hips, but he quickly dropped his arms, clasping his wrist with one hand, the other hand making a fist. Whether it was conscious or not, it blocked her view of his groin. She looked away as soon as she realized *why* he would feel a need to block her view...of the leather now straining over his genitals. Clearing her throat, she answered his demand.

"Yes, we do. Or at least something along those lines. Literally, and salaciously." Glancing back at him, she folded her arms under her arms defensively as her cheeks heated. "It's an erotic romance. The only way we're going to be released from this situation is if both of us...erm... That is, if you give me...and I give you..."

"Spit it out, Miss Granger," he ordered her, flushing as well. It had taken them months of effort to be able to call each other by their first names, but then this wasn't a situation where a first name was appropriate, really.

Somehow, that was just the wrong choice of words. Hermione found herself choking on a hastily raised fist, her shoulders shaking. Severus scowled at her. Despite her best efforts, her giggles escaped, until laughter rang through the woods around them. Meeting the absurdity of their situation with a fatalistic acceptance of what they had to do, she grinned. "Actually, I heard that nice girls swallow!"

His eyes widened. Whirling away from her, he stood rigid with tension, shoulders bowed, head down. When he stayed like that for more than a minute, Hermione shifted forward, touching his shoulder. He flinched.

"...Severus?" She considered what might be disconcerting him. "I realize we have to...erm...copulate, but surely it's not that bad a prospect?"

"I don't need a *pity* fuck!"

### CHAPTER THREE

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His harsh exclamation made her jerk back, as if his words had been snapping teeth. Composing herself, Hermione tried not to frown at his back. "It's not a pity fuck! It's a situational need. If we want out of this book, we need to make love! I'm sorry if I'm not your ideal type--oh, dear," she muttered, breaking off as her brain spun off on a side-tangent. "I just realized there'll have to be another safety feature installed!"

That pricked his curiosity enough that he glanced over his shoulder at her. "What?"

"Sexual orientation. It just occurred to me that if two people of opposing orientations pick up the book together--"

"--I *am not gay!*" he protested, turning to face her with a shocked, affronted glare as his voice broke with an almost adolescent squeak.

"I'm not saying that you *are*," Hermione retorted. "I'm saying that, as the official beta-tester of this book, I need to consider possibilities like that! If one partner is gay and the other isn't, they might not be able to bring themselves to fulfill the book's purpose, and escape this bloody thing! I can imagine that I'm not very high on your list of appealing prospects for such things," she added tartly, "but if you're heterosexual, and I'm heterosexual, at least we have *some* chance of getting things going, between us!"

"You're not the problem!" Severus snapped, flipping his hand at her. "You look like a pin-up girl, in that dress--*any* man would be ready to jump all over those curves,

straight or otherwise!"

As compliments went, it wasn't suave, but it did seem heartfelt. And it did make her cheeks blush. Hermione folded her arms under her breasts, realized that pushed up her cleavage, started to unfold them in embarrassment, and then refolded them deliberately. "...Well, if you find me attractive, then *what* is the problem?"

"*Me*." He spread his arms wide, and the dragon-hide jacket gaped open, showing off a dusting of dark hairs encircling each nipple, as well as that half-column of a treasure line. "I know full well that I've got all the good looks of an anemic wax bean, and the personality of a diarrhetic porcupine!"

*...I would've said constipated*, a corner of her mind snarked. Hermione slapped herself internally for that. *Behave! And he's not nearly as bad as he used to be! You quite like your breakfast-table conversations with him, you know, the domestic ones of discussing your plans for the day with each other. And the complex technical conversations you engage in during work, and the meandering ones you have over supper, touching on every other topic under the sun. He's the perfect companion for you, intellectually!*

*Yeah, but how are you going to tell him that, in a way that he'll understand, accept, and feel cooperative about, afterwards?*

Sighing, Hermione tilted her head, giving his body a thorough perusal. "You don't look like an anemic wax bean, Severus. You're thin and sallow-skinned, yes, but now that I can finally see you in something other than all that multi-layered Victorian prudery you wear, you have a very attractive body, with just the right amount of muscles--and that treasure-line all but begs to be licked, in my opinion."

He blushed, yanking his jacket closed again, but something in his tense posture softened a little at her blunt, flat-voiced admission.

"As for your personality, you're prickly, yes, but you're not nearly as bad company as you used to be. You're also staggeringly intelligent, and I happen to find intelligence highly attractive."

--Then what did you ever see in Weasley?" he snorted. And blanched, ducking his head. "...I apologize," he mumbled gruffly. "That was uncalled-for."

*Nothing like being dashed in the face with a dose of cold memory* Hermione thought grimly. Sighing, she let it go. "Yes, it was uncalled-for, but I forgive you. And...it's true that Ron wasn't quite up to my par, academically, but he wasn't an idiot, either. He had other qualities to admire. Just as you have your own qualities to admire."

He lifted his gaze, peering at her almost...shyly...through his hair. His voice, however, was its usual acerbic self. "*What* qualities?"

"Well, your high intelligence is very attractive, as I said," Hermione reiterated. "And your competence is undeniable, which is appealing. Your confidence, too; confidence in a man is usually quite sexy, so long as it's not bragging or macho posturing. You're *not* overly macho for that matter, which is something I find to be a bit of a turn-off in men. And you have an intensity about you," she added, speaking from her heart, "a passion for your work that makes me wonder just how much passion you'd also put into love-making. Plus, you're very methodical and detail-oriented, which suggests you'd be a very thorough lover, too. I have faith you will be able to make love very well, given all that I've observed about you."

"Hermione, I have *never* made love'," he stated tersely. Then flushed and corrected himself sharply. "By that, I don't mean to say that I'm a virgin! *Far* from it," he added defensively. "I mean I have only ever hired and fucked prostitutes. You expect things of me I cannot provide, with your unrealistically high expectations! *Make love*," he added disparagingly. "'Making love' presumes that *two* people are willing to expend that much effort and energy, and frankly, no one was ever willing to do so with me! I'm a bloody diarrhetic porcupine!"

"Severus, you are *not* a diarrhetic porcupine," Hermione retorted, palms on her hips as she glared at him. "You are a *constipated* porcupine! Half the time when I'm dealing with you, I'm tempted to slip a colonic draught into your morning coffee, you've got something wedged up in there so tight! *I'm* the diarrhetic porcupine. Constantly questioning and talking and spouting off knowledge at the drop of a pointy witch's hat...and just as prickly in my own way as you!"

"Whatever you feel you might lack in the knowledge of love-making versus base fucking, I probably know about from my extensive reading of the subject! Conversely, what I lack in actual experience in fucking," she repeated, surprised that her cheeks weren't glowing hot from such a base word, "you more than make up for it!--And *no*, I'm not a virgin, either! But I'd hardly mark three lousy, somewhat hasty encounters with Ron as the whole sum of all the sexual experimentation I'll ever do in my life, because quite frankly, I want a lot more out of my sex-life than a long-dead ex-boyfriend, my fingers, and a rather unsatisfactory dildo, even if I *do* know a decent vibration charm!"

Silence filled the woods around them as her words faded into the trees.

"...And I cannot believe I just shouted that at you," she finished, hands sliding over her face, hiding it from his stunned, blinking perusal for a voice-muffling moment. "God, I'm going to *kill* Luna, once we get out of this...or thank her..."

Dragging her hands down, Hermione bravely bared her face and studied him.

"I *don't* want to ruin our working relationship, Severus. But I would prefer to believe that it *won't* ruin the way we interact out there, in the real world. This is just a novel. An experimental enchantment. We simply have to go through all of the requisite stages of the story to escape its incompletely enspelled clutches. Right now, neither of us can tell if it'll be worth repeating out there in the real world or not.

"All I know is, you're a bloody marvelous research partner, and a truly decent conversational partner, and a tidy house-mate who doesn't leave his socks all over the place...and whatever happens, Severus, I don't want to lose *that*." He ducked his head at her words, almost as if he were shy. Hermione would've left it at that, but she couldn't. She found herself adding, "And...and if intellectual discourse were a form of sex...well, I'll just have to be blunt and say that I'm a *very* satisfied woman, regarding your performance! Your voice alone is enough to make it qualify as sexual!"

He looked up at her in shock, his face flushing to a degree she had only ever seen it flush when he was furious. This, however, was a blush of embarrassment. His mouth opened, then shut without saying a word. A hard swallow and he tried again. Still nothing. Finally, he ran both of his hands through his sable locks, baring quite a lot of his chest as his leather jacket gaped open. Closing his eyes, he stayed still and quiet for a long moment, then dropped his arms with a sigh and looked levelly at her.

"To be honest...a condition that goes against my every instinct for self-preservation," he muttered quietly, "I have found your own discourse to be quite stimulating. Intellectually. And...you are not unattractive."

Hermione blinked at that, feeling her own cheeks heating in a blush.

"I have deliberately ignored that latter part because we do have an excellent working rapport, one that I did not wish to disturb. But...*this* is a Pandora's Box that, once opened, I don't think we can crawl back into. I *am* a man, Hermione," Severus added, touching his bare chest with his fingertips. "I have needs. Even if this is all in our minds... I have tried to banish such fantasies from my thoughts, when dealing with you. Once we indulge, I doubt either of us will be able to forget it so easily. It *will* cause difficulties between us."

Hermione's mind had raced from processing the novel thought of, *He likes me?* to the more important thought of, *He has thought of me before? Sexually? Damn--all this wasted time!* That was definitely her libido talking. But she could live with that. Closing the distance between them with two slow steps, Hermione lifted her hand to his chest. Her fingers splayed over his lightly haired flesh, making his shudder and flinch back a little. But not before she had felt him sway *into* her touch.

Keeping her hand in place, keeping her eyes locked with his, she addressed his concerns with the bravado of her former House. "I don't think it will. Not if we embrace

what we have. Yes, it might be awkward for a while, but...Severus, are you really that satisfied with the cold, basic transactions of a Knockturn Alley whore? Isn't there a part of you that wants more?" Shifting closer, she touched him with both hands inside his jacket, then slid her arms around his chest, bringing their bodies together. Breaking eye-contact as he tried to speak and failed, she tucked her cheek against his chest. "Isn't there a part of you that wants to be held by someone who cares about you...like there is within me?"

"If there was such a person--" he started to disparage.

Hermione shifted back far enough to glare at him. "--Hello? I am *holding* you, here! And before you snark at me, I assure you, cuddling is *not* a necessary part of this book's script!"

"You're just fulfilling the first part of the book's plot requirements," he snorted, though there was an edge of uncertainty in his expression.

"Technically, *you* are the one who is supposed to be seducing*me* throughout this ruddy volume," she retorted sharply. "The plot won't advance until you get that stick of loneliness and woe-is-me pulled out of your bum, and turn yourself into a Slytherin Sex God! I am *holding* you because I *want* to hold you, not because the book says I have to--really, Severus, I thought you were a lot less thick-headed than that!"

"I am not thick-headed!" Severus protested, catching her upper arms to hold her in place as he pulled back and glared down at her.

"Oh, yes you are!" Hermione shot back.

"I am not!"

"Then *prove* it!"

He gave her a blank look for a moment, then hauled her close, bumping their noses and mashing their lips together. He mumbled something that could've been an apology when she yelped a little, her upper lip pinched between their teeth, and gentled his attack. The first few seconds were awkward, but then he slid his arms around her back, pulling her body against his. Surrounded by lean, tall, snogging male, enveloped by his musky, herbal scent, their lips parting to let their tongues tentatively entangle, Hermione shivered in pleasure.

She'd missed this, snogging a boyfriend. Not that she could really ever describe Severus Snape as a mere *boy*...no, this was unmistakably a man holding her. A man who, if a little untutored in his skills, was still able to excite her more than Ron ever had--and it was no insult to Ron's memory, since she'd enjoyed his kisses. Clinging to her housemate, she returned the first tentative thrusts of his tongue with enthusiasm. Teaching him what Ron had taught her, having learnt it himself from Lavender. A sound escaped him, the sound forming a sort of audible essence of appreciation. Scooping her closer, he bent her backward over his arms, adding his own interpretation to the lesson by sucking his way down to her throat.

Hermione always knew he had the genius for improvisation. But when he started licking her throat, long slow laps that tickled from her collarbone to her chin, she giggled in protest. "--What are you doing, Severus? You're not supposed to eat me 'til later!"

He stilled. She felt a distinct *twitch* against her abdomen, where the hardened length of his erection pushed into her stomach through the layers of her rich red dress and those sexy leather pants. For a long moment, she could almost hear his Slytherin brain cells thinking about their position. Just as she felt the need to try and seduce him into cooperating, in case he had changed his mind, he released her. Unfortunately, she was off-balance, being bent over, and started to fall. Fortunately, he also fetched his wand in a smooth, swift draw from where it had been tucked into his sleeve, enchanting her before she could hit the forest floor.

"*Mobilicorpus*!"

Hermione gasped as her body stopped falling. Under the direction of his wand, she felt herself lifted by an invisible cushion. This was the first time she'd ever been afflicted with the Body Moving Charm while awake; a bit of tentative exploration showed that she could move a little bit, but not very far. That left her with her legs and arms splayed in an awkward reclining position, caught in the control of his spell.

A flick of his wand when she was levitating shoulder-high to him widened her knees, making her blush. Underneath the dress, she could feel the wedge of a thong panty. Severus, his expression just a little too lascivious and subtly leering to be clinical, studied the fabric revealed by the hem as it fell back from her pelvis. The hand not holding his wand reached between her parted thighs; it trembled a little as he gingerly hooked the crotch of her abbreviated knickers, tugging the bright red material aside.

Hermione could barely breathe, she was so shocked at his blatant exploration. The lust in his face intensified, though he barely twitched a muscle. "...Severus?"

His nostrils flared. She couldn't blame him; she could smell herself, too, aroused from all that wonderful snogging. Eyelids fluttering shut, he breathed deeply again, clearly savouring her aroma--and then shocked her as he dove between her thighs, yanking her panties firmly out of his way as he licked and suckled and nipped, laving the damp folds of her body with greedy little growls of masculine hunger.

Unbelievable. Un-fucking-believable. Hermione let her head loll back against the confines of the spell holding her aloft. Her own throat spasmed, releasing moans of appreciation. Ron had tried this, hadn't really liked it, and hadn't been good enough for her to insist that he keep trying anyway. But while there were a few moments of awkwardness, touches that did nothing for her in certain spots, the scrape of his teeth that was a little too painful at times to be pleasurable...the rest of it was incredible. Certainly the way he explored her depths with two fingers, plunging them in counterpoint to his suckling was mind-boggling. Hermione found herself crying out, first in little whimpers, then in longer whinges, until her cries of pleasure rose so loudly, it echoed through the trees, her body shaking with an incredible climax.

Lapping at her with slow, gentle strokes of his tongue, Severus extracted his fingers. A moment later, he left her body to bask alone in its warm-fuzzy glow of completion. Cracking open her eyes, she watched as he licked his fingers clean. His eyes were the blackest she had ever seen, filled with a dark knowledge of her carnality, and his concomitant ability to make her scream with pleasure. Once his hand was clean, he used it to gently tug her underwear back into place. Another flick of his wand, and she felt her body lowering gently to the forest floor.

"When you have recovered, join me at 'Grandmother's House'," Severus instructed his panting young employer.

Dazed, Hermione frowned up at him as the *mobilicorpus* ended its hold on her limbs, letting her sag against the ground. "...That's it? You're not going to do more?"

"Hermione, I am supposed to delay you here in the forest somehow, hurry ahead of you to the shack at the end of the tale, fix it up into a love-nest after getting rid of god-knows-who will be waiting for us as 'Granny'," he retorted tartly, "and do it all with a raging erection! Even I know I don't get to fuck you until we're in a bed!--And another thing," he growled. "Kindly inform Miss Lovegood to alter the bloody book's description of the hero's clothes. Most men do *not* enjoy feeling their balls being crushed mercilessly when aroused, no matter how soft and supple the leather might be!"

Whirling--as much as he could in tight leather and a matching, open jacket--he stalked off down the path, walking with an odd gait.

Clearing her throat, Hermione called after him, "Um...Grandmother's House is *that* way..."

Marching in a stiff little half-circle, he passed her without glancing down, though he did follow the direction her finger pointed. The silhouette she had of his pelvis, leather straining visibly as it restrained his erection, pleased Hermione to no end. Sagging back against the forest floor, she sighed and closed her eyes, enjoying the aftershocks of her orgasm.

...Who knew Severus could actually be such a Sex God?

# Part 2

## Chapter 2 of 2

Lotm's own entry into the Lost In A Book Challenge.

### CHAPTER FOUR

...

On the good side, he wasn't bothered by leather-crushed testicles anymore. On the bad side of things...he was never, ever going to get the image of Minerva McGonagall in tartan plaid bermuda shorts out of his brain. Ever. Nor her exclamation of, "*Hot damn!*" when she read the contents of the envelope he handed to her, nor the way she kicked up her heels before grabbing the Portkey, and most definitely it was going to take his strongest Memory Scrubbing Potion to cleanse his poor, abused brain of her final shout before vanishing to sunny Mexico, "Just don't touch my stash of toys, young man--or if you do, clean them thoroughly, both before and after!"

She was referring, of course, to her collection of *sexual* toys.

Which were prominently displayed on a set of knickknack shelves over the fireplace mantel.

Severus had never known a grown man's penis could shrink to the size of an infant's, as he stood there in the living-room and just *cringed*.

Finally, unable to bear the view, he whipped his wand at a doily on the back of the loveseat, Transfiguring it into a large sheet that sailed up and draped itself over the displays. That was slightly better. Nervous, he mounted the steps of the A-frame house to the bedroom loft. The walls echoed with his groan as he confronted the heart-shaped, revolving bed.

"One *thousand* points from Ravenclaw, Miss Lovegood," he snarled under his breath, "for subjecting me to this...this *travesty* of--of--God, I'm expected to seduce her in this *cathouse?*"

Her. Miss Granger. Hermione. Zapping the bed into a plain, non-revolving four-poster with a white down comforter, not its former plaid-velvet travesty, Severus sank onto the edge of the mattress, remembering.

He had snarled and sneered at her offer to hire him as a research assistant, initially. After being refused for so many positions, he'd managed to set up a small potions supplying career under an assumed name...but someone figured out it was Snape the Bastard Traitor a few days later. His suspicious mind had instantly wondered if *she* had leaked his identity...but he knew she hadn't known he had a job. She'd approached him because she thought he was completely adrift, unable even to be rehired at the school. Remus Lupin was held in higher esteem as a war-hero than Severus, and the damned werewolf was still blackballed from most forms of employment!

So, when she had asked him again to come work with her, he had reluctantly given in and joined her at the old Black residence. Granger had the most pull of anyone who had survived the war, really. She was the Best Friend Who Survived, after all. One of the few who had survived, period, of that final battle. She had even testified at his hearing, several months into his incarceration, adding her celebrity-status weight to Albus' beyond-the-grave testimony.

Her influence had diminished somewhat, given she preferred to do research in private over attending Ministry parties in public, and it had diminished further once word got out that she'd employed *him* to work with her...but she was one of those rare souls who honestly didn't care much for appearances. Some--they didn't even sleep on the same floor at the former Headquarters of the Order--but she didn't flinch at seeing his face at the breakfast table every single day. She had, in fact, accepted his presence quite readily.

He had missed knowing his colleagues at Hogwarts would murmur him a polite greeting, no matter how surly he was before his first mug of coffee. And though he never responded politely before breakfast, he had given them polite nods and murmurs on his way out of the Great Hall. Hermione had done much the same, that first morning together. Just handed him a cup of coffee, wait until it had been drained and refilled, then outlined what she thought the two of them could do for the day.

There had been a bit of power-jockeying between the two of them, but Severus had quickly found it more stimulating than annoying to argue with her. Arguments had become bantering, and bantering had morphed into wide-ranging discussions as each sought to test the other's breadth and depth of knowledge. It had been very stimulating. *Intellectual intercourse*, he acknowledged, sagging onto his back. He flung an arm over his face, smelling the scent of the leather jacket with that twist of realism Miss Lovegood had infused into this story. *Conversational foreplay. Mental sex...god, that first week was hell; I kept running into this nubile young witch with a brain even bigger than her breasts, and I kept having to snarl at her and sneak Freezing Charms into the fly of my pants, until I finally got over the urge to shag her senseless.*

*But I didn't get over it, did I?*

He had thought it was merely the curse of being male: encounter anyone attractive, interact with them for any length of time, and the brain below the belt would attempt to steal away the reins of control from the brain above the belt. Severus had used chilling charms and masturbation to handle his problem. He'd even considered visiting Knockturn Alley to relieve his needs, as he had done during the war. But for one, there were plenty of unsavoury characters who would love to get their hands on him in that particular lane's shadowed twists and turns, and for another...he just hadn't made the time. Their research was too fascinating, and her presence too subtly intoxicating, for him to think it was worth his effort to leave and seek out company elsewhere.

What he wanted to do was protest that he wasn't in love with her. And maybe he wasn't. But if there was one thing Severus Josaiah Snape knew, it was that this *book* experience was going to change everything between the two of them. In fact, it already had. He could still taste her on his tongue, smell her essence on his chin. Just remembering it, just licking his lips for the last little bit of flavour, let him know that he wasn't going to be satisfied with an ephemeral novel.

*If she thinks I'm not going to be interested in her after we escape this, she's quite mistaken* he decided. *Which means I need to disabuse her of that notion immediately...and by preference, make her crave me to the same extent that I want her. It would certainly salve my pride if she begged me to make love to her in the real world*, Severus added with a silent smirk. It faded as he added to himself, *...Which means I need to thoroughly seduce her in this one. Somehow.*

The bed shifted, making him jerk his forearm off his eyes. Brown curls cascaded down around him, attached to a face with warm brown eyes and a hot red mini-dress. Hermione. Straddling him, kneeling on all fours over his body. He hadn't even heard her enter, nor mount the stairs. She smiled down at him and purred, "My, what deep, black eyes you have."

"All the better to see...your cleavage with," Severus managed, his voice faltering as he glanced down and caught sight of the cleft between her breasts.

She grinned and thankfully continued to *not* mention any maternal ancestors as she added, "What a big nose you have!"

"All the better to smell your musk with," Severus returned, remembering the scent of her arousal and how it had made him so deliciously dizzy with lust.

"Gee, I thought it was all the better to grind into my clitoris with," Hermione retorted. She blushed as she said it, but she also smiled.

Encouraged, Severus grabbed her arms and rolled them over. She squirmed further onto the bed, and he released her so that he could follow her. Now it was he who straddled her, caging her between his palms and his knees. Slowly, he licked his lips. She followed his tongue, licking her own. No doubt remembering what he had done to her out in the woods.

Severus flashed her a wicked grin and muttered a single wandless word. "*Manuxtengua*."

And smoothed each of his eyebrows two seconds later, as his tongue finished lengthening and thickening.

The shocked, glazed look in her eyes made him very hard in response. As did her lust-filled whisper. "My...what a huge *tongue* you have..."

"All the better to *eat* you with," Severus muttered, for the first time in his life grateful that he'd eavesdropped on James Potter and Lily Evans that one night in his seventh year. Back then, he had burned with jealousy and envy. In the intervening years, he had flinched at the thought of using the spell on the loose women he bought in the Alley--where who knew how many wizards had used their bodies. But by her own admission, his savoury-sweet little employer had only ever experienced a Weasley.

Snape was far, far more superior. At least, this particular Snape was determined to prove it irrefutably to her, even if it took every sexual trick that he could imagine. Crawling down the length of her body, he stood when he crawled off the side of the bed, and stripped away his clothes. His enchanted tongue darted out to lick his jaw-line, scraping at the last hints of their previous encounter. Letting her know it was going to happen all over again, if with a twist.

Scrambling upright, she started divesting her own clothes. Shoes and stockings, dress and thong all thunked and fluttered to the floor of the loft, respective to their materials. They followed the dropping of his jacket, the shucking of his boots, and the doffing of his trousers. That was when Severus discovered it wasn't the leather of his pants that had been giving him a wedgie since his arrival in this book-wrought world. It was the thong briefs he was wearing. He almost smacked his face into his palm in mortification. The lustful look in his bed-partner's eyes mollified him. As did the way she grabbed what little fabric there was, peeling it back from his erection.

And then those lips of hers, those luscious, talkative, know-it-all lips wrapped around him. She might not have much experience, but damn--Severus was ready to moan on a stack of holy books that she was naturally talented in all matters concerning her mouth...until he heard her whispering, "*Manuxtengua*."

He almost dropped to the floor, feeling her tongue lengthen and wrap around not only his prick, but his scrotum, too; the tip of it played with the soft spot between his testicles. Staggering free with pure self-preservation instinct, Severus tried to strengthen his knees as she, too, licked her tongue over her eyebrows, grinning impishly.

"Fuck!" the vulgarity escaped him involuntarily. It felt good to say, and it was indeed what they were going to do, so Severus swore it again. "Fuck!"

"Gladly!" And the minx *giggled!*

That did it. He tackled her, wrestling her onto the bed the proper way. Save that where her head was near the pillows, he doubled up his legs, and where her legs were near the foot, he buried his head. She twisted him onto his side so that she wasn't crushed, obligingly lifting one thigh so that he could use the other for a pillow. After that, it was a matter of wrapping and licking, laving and tickling as he penetrated her and she engulfed him.

It was indeed much like the scene he'd witnessed that night in Greenhouse 6, so many years before, though he hadn't known if Evans had used the spell herself, back then. This time around, however, it was Severus who enjoyed the pleasure of literally tongue-fucking his beloved while he listened to her muffled squeals of pleasure, and not some oversexed, under-brained teenaged rival while his young self merely looked on in deeply sour envy.

*I wonder if the Hunter is going to be James Potter...and if I'll have the pleasure of killing him* Severus thought distractedly, forgetting for a few moments that the Hunter's job was to kill the Big Bad Wolf, and not the other way around. The thought was almost enough to make him climax. He didn't want to flood her mouth, however. Knowing that this was merely a book, that there would be no lasting consequences, Severus withdrew his tongue from her depths, eliciting a muffled moan of protest from her. Prying his hips free from her clutches, he righted himself in relation to her, slotted his hips between her legs, and thrust home in the aperture he had ensured just moments ago was thoroughly lubricated.

Breath hissing between his teeth at the sheer pleasure, he rested inside her body for a long, self-controlling moment. Until he felt her licking his lips, and opened his eyes to see that distended appendage stretching up between them like a pink, nubby serpent. Grinning fiercely, Severus stuck out his own tongue, making her giggle as the two organs slid together. It was gross and messy, and yet erotic as his head lowered to hers, their tongues meeting inside in a tangling, erotic knotwork. Her thighs lifted, her calves crossing behind his buttocks, encouraging him to move inside of her.

It was incredible, feeling every slippery nuance of her folds and depths, without the slightly numbing distance of a Prophylaxis Charm protecting him from her flesh. He never used a whore without one. Rape had never interested him either, and so he had always wondered what it would be like to make love to a woman bareback, with nothing protecting either of them from sexual diseases or the threat of an unplanned pregnancy.

Heaven. Pure sexual heaven. Heat and wetness clasped him in spasming welcome as she moaned into his mouth--he increased his thrusts. His brain--both of them really--was boiling with lust. Sliding his mouth to her ear, he breathed the emotions that were within him into the delicate curves as she scraped her fingernails encouragingly down his back. "Oh, god, Hermione, I've wanted to fuck you for so long...I want to fill you with my seed, fuck you until you scream, pour every pounding piece of me into you until I've fucked a hole for myself in your heart--"

*Oh, shite. Where did that come from?*

"Oh gods, Severus--yes!"

Her shout turned into a wail as she stiffened, then bucked up into him, orgasming hard. Swearing, Severus pumped hard and fast as he, too, spasmed with his climax. Sagging onto his elbows, careful to pin down her body with his own only from the waist down, Severus struggled for breath. This was the most sexually satisfying experience of his life...and it was an illusion conjured by a book. Waiting in the post-repletion glow for the tome to release them, he jumped as the front door banged open, downstairs.

"**SINNERS!!**" a voice thundered.

Severus scrambled to free himself from his partner, snatching up his wand. He felt foolishly exposed in his naked state as thunderously loud footsteps pounded up to the loft...and the diminutive figure of Filius Flitwick, his former colleague, rushed into view. His wand was out, but he wasn't wearing his usual pinstripe robes with spats. Instead, he had on a strange replica of Snape's old teaching robes, save for the rectangular insertion of a white vicar's collar at his throat.

Behind him on the bed, Hermione covered herself with part of the down comforter, and nudged Severus in the hip with a proffered pillow. Clutching it over his loins with his free hand, he faced his enraged ex-colleague. "Now, Filius..."

"Don't you 'Now, Filius' me!" the Charms Professor roared at full-squeak, somehow sounding intimidating at the same time that he sounded amusing. Scowling at his fellow teacher, Filius lectured him sternly. "You have fornicated with a young woman of good breeding and excellent background, and now you will pay for your licentiousness!"



Marry her, or die!"

"*What?*" Severus whipped his head to the side, staring at his partner. "*Marry* you?"

Hermione shrugged. "It's just a book! Luna discussed what to do with the Hunter part of the story...and so she came up with the idea of Vicar Ulf Hunter, here."

Filius--or rather, Ulf--lifted his chin belligerently. "That's right! And you're either going to make an honest woman out of her, or die like the scoundrel you are!"

"--It's just a book, Severus!" his partner and employer pleaded, clearly expecting him to explode with indignation.

Frankly, Severus expected it, too. For about half a second or so. He was too sated to bother with outrage, however. Too satisfied with what had just happened...and too smart to deny that the two of them had basically already lived as husband and wife for the last half-year--hell, she cooked like his wife, and he fixed up their house like her husband! They argued together, talked together, worked together, read in contented silence together...

The only thing they hadn't done was sleep together. And this book--ten thousand points TO Ravenclaw, Severus thought, feeling a hell of a lot better about Looney Luna Lovegood right there and then--had just ameliorated that serious oversight. Turning to face the woman on the transfigured bed, Severus dropped to one naked knee, ignoring the petite character bristling at the top of the loft stairs. Lifting her hand in his, he kissed her knuckles and asked quite seriously, "Hermione...would you do me the great honour of consenting to be my wife, for now and for always?"

She blushed, cleared her throat, and replied, "Erm...yes. Of course. I would be deeply honoured to be your wife."

"Excellent!" Filius-Ulf squeaked, and lifted his wand for a swish-and-flick. "By the power invested in me, I now pronounce you--*free of this book!*"

Darkness grabbed Severus in its teeth, shaking him free of the loft.

## CHAPTER FIVE

...

He came back to himself at the breakfast table, with a lap full of blushing housemate. Hermione cleared her throat. "Erm...well! *That* was interesting..." Slapping the volume shut, she dropped it on the table in the midst of its wrapping paper and dust-jacket, and tapped it with her wand, quickly securing it against another accidental entrapment. "I'll send it back to Luna, so neither of us gets lost in the book again before all those problems are fixed..."

"Not so fast," Severus countered, wrapping his arms around her as she squirmed to slide out of his lap. "We have a few things to discuss."

Blushing, Hermione tried to free herself. "I'm not going to expect you to...to *do* anything, Severus. It was just a book. I know you don't really--"

"Hush!" he commanded, covering her lips with his fingertips. His other arm remained tightly wrapped around her hips, holding her on his wool-clad thighs. When she stopped struggling, though not blushing, he continued. "I see no reason to delay matters more than absolutely necessary. A quick visit to the border of Scotland should see the matter properly addressed; there's no waiting period, up there. So, if there is anyone you want along as a witness, it's best you contact them quickly."

"Contact who?" she asked quizzically as he withdrew his fingers. "For what?"

"For witnessing our marriage," Severus reminded her.

"Our *what?*" She struggled again in his lap, but only far enough to face him. "Severus, have you lost your mind?"

"No, but you've lost your wits," he shot back. "Or do you not remember your vow just now, in the book, to marry me and be my wife?"

"But...but that was just in the book!" she spluttered. "It was just the release-condition! You don't have to hold yourself to it!"

Twining his fingers in her curls, Severus brought their noses within gentle bumping distance, peering into her tawny brown eyes. "Oh, but I do," he all but purred as she gaped at him. "You see, I didn't ask you to marry me temporarily. I asked you 'for now and for *always*.' A prospect to which you readily agreed."

And then, to shut her up in case she had any arguments...he kissed her. As thoroughly as he had in the books. Idly, Severus upped Ravenclaw's standings by a few more points; its alumni, Miss Lovegood, had an incredible skill for realism. She tasted in real life exactly as she had tasted in that silly novel. At least, with this set of lips. While he had her distracted, Severus shoved the book and the breakfast plates off of the table, ignoring the crack of breaking pottery as something fell off the broad surface. Rising from his chair, he settled her back onto the cleared spot and yanked at her clothes, doing his best to continue snogging her.

He felt like moaning in relief when she started tugging at his own garments in turn. Later, he would undoubtedly find a few buttons missing and scattered somewhere on the floor, but right now, it was a very small price to pay for admission into her jeans--*ah*, yessss... An impatient fumble removed the trainers blocking him from drawing the denim down her legs, and then they were on the floor, followed by the scrap of her panties. His own trousers pooled around his ankles, his breath hissing through his teeth as she lowered his boxers--much more sensible than that stupid thong-thing--and then her thighs were splaying in familiar welcome, only this time it was even wetter and hotter and more wonderful than before.

Severus didn't care that he knew that this was real life, not a book. He didn't care that he hadn't cast the Prophylaxis Charm. Hell, half the tabloids in Wizarding Britain thought the two of them were shagging each other like mad rabbits in secret. Thrusting deep, he held himself still for a moment, murmuring his proposal into her ear.

"I intend, my dear fiancée, to mark you as my own. We already share this house as husband and wife, save for the most intimate definition of it. Everyone thinks we're doing this outside of marriage, making me a consciousness, advantage-taking bastard, and you a loose woman of no morals. When neither of us qualifies for such baseless labels.

"To rectify this oversight, I will put my ring on your finger, link my name legally and permanently to yours...and fill your womb with my seed. You will be my companion, my partner, my wife and the mother of my children, and you will be my just and long-overdue reward for the hell I endured, helping bring the Dark Lord to a very long-overdue end. And for every day and year and decade we are married," he added as she twisted her head to glare sharply at him, "...I shall endeavour to enslave myself to your heart. I know I'm a bastard who doesn't deserve your heart, but I am going to claim it...and one day, I will be worthy of it."

Her eyes glittered, filling with tears. Flinging her arms around him, Hermione choked out a sound that could have been his name, and pulled him into a heated kiss. Carefully repressing the urge to smile, Severus knew he had snared her in his wiles. It was only fair. She had certainly enthralled him, in the archaic, slavery-based sense. One taste of her sweet body, and he was willing to do anything to keep her. Luckily for him, he didn't have too many scruples as to how to go about it. Luckily for her...he did have some. Of course, the breathless, enthusiastic snogging and tonsil-sucking on her part was a distinct reassurance that she wasn't objecting to his high-handed insistence that they marry. He resumed his slow, tantalizing thrusts, teasing her with a taste of what he had given her while they were in the books....

A long, satisfying while later, after he had filled her with his essence on both the kitchen table and in the broad four-poster bed she'd claimed for her own, after he'd licked that essence out of her and proved that the Tongue Extension Charm was real and not just some literary device, Severus found himself cuddling with Hermione Granger. Yes, cuddling. He lay on his back, with his curly-haired vixen of a housemate and employer plastered to his side. One of his arms cradled her back, holding her close, while the hand of the other toyed with some of the locks that had spilled in a tangled mess over his chest.

As necessary as all that shagging had been...they still had things to discuss. "So."

"Mmm?" she asked sleepily, nuzzling his pectoral muscle with her cheek.

"...You *will* marry me, will you not?" Severus found himself asking insecurely, instead of launching into the details of his plans to drag her off to Scotland to wed them over the anvil.

"Silly Severus," Hermione muttered sleepily. "Of course I will."

"Good. Now, about Gretna Green..."

"I love you," she sighed.

Severus stilled. Not from the shock of her confession--she *had* screamed at one point after they had retired to her bedchamber on the first floor that he was her Slytherin Sex God, after all--but from the strength of his emotions in response. Blinking rapidly, he squeezed her shoulders. "Good...good."

He thought for a moment that she was falling asleep. But her voice asked with more wistfulness than weariness in its tone, "...Severus?"

"Yes, Hermione," he found himself admitting. "I...love you, too."

Now the weariness came through as she giggled briefly, tiredly. "It'll get better, you know. Saying it."

"God, I hope so," he muttered, uncomfortable with any display of mushy sentimentality, whether it was coming from him, or just aimed at him. Still, he gathered her closer, wrapping both arms around her as she giggled again. "You realize all of this does *not* exempt you from fixing our meals for the next week."

"Hmphf," she snorted. "Nor does it exempt you from peeling back another layer of the Black Family Travesty."

"We'll put our own up in its place," he found himself offering. This time, it was she who stilled. Carefully, he reassured her, "--With lineages on both the Muggle and Wizarding sides of our families. Proudly displayed. Well...my father was a bastard and a drunkard, and I'm not very keen on my pureblooded relatives... Maybe we'll just post your side of the family."

She snorted again, this time from laughter. "Nice try. If it's one thing I've learned from the war, you cannot escape your past. You can learn to live with it; you can atone for any misdeeds, occasionally find some means of escaping the memories, and eventually the pain will fade...but it's a part of you."

"Speaking of escapism," Severus murmured speculatively, "how soon will Miss Lovegood have that book fixed, do you think?"

"What, fancy another go?" Hermione snickered. "Wasn't Filius bad enough?"

Wincing, he involuntarily recalled Minerva and her bermuda tartan shorts.

Hermione lifted her head from his chest. "...Excuse me, but did you must mutter, 'Avada me now'?"

"We'll wait for the *next* fairytale," he asserted, ignoring her question.

"You know, I always did have a thing for the Beast, in Beauty and the Beast," she sighed, sinking back into place. "As a little girl."

"I liked that one, too, in my youth...but if anyone else calls you the 'Beast', I'll have to hex them."

Once again, her head lifted from its resting spot on his chest. "--Severus Snape, did you just make a joke?"

"You'll have to torture me, Hermione, to get a confession to pass my lips," he quipped, closing his eyes.

Then snapped them open again as she stated firmly, "*Manuxtengua!*"

*Merlin...what a way to be tortured...* The feel of her tongue laving his nipples at the same time was incredible. Unspeakable. Hands burying in her curls as she licked her way down to his navel, then his straining shaft--and he had honestly thought he hadn't another round in him, after they'd ended the last one--Severus massaged her scalp while her tongue did all the work. A stray thought had him reaching for one of the wands on the nightstand. A flick-and-swish, and the duvet transformed itself into a scarlet cloak.

Lifting her face, she released his genitals from her tongue, retracting it long enough to ask, "What...?"

Severus smirked. "You do look 'luscious' in red, Hermione. A pity I cannot give Miss Lovegood a thousand House points for coming up with that book...or Gryffindor, for curling my toes."

Blushing, she dipped her head again, and did her best to indeed curl his toes.

The End

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### Lost in a Book Challenge

Offered by Ladyofthemasque

Based upon the story "Lost in a (Not So) Good Book" by Bubblebunny (<http://ashwinder.sycophanthex.com/viewstory.php?sid=12466>)

Here's the **Lost in A Book Challenge**:

1. Hermione Granger and Severus Snape encounter a wizarding romance novel
2. They get sucked literally into the storyline, taking on the roles of the hero and heroine
3. They must complete the storyline of the novel in order to escape the book and return to the real world
4. They must fall in love with each other during the course of their adventure, though they don't have to start out that way, if you don't want. The main genre will therefore be Romance.
5. The sub-genre of the novel can be any category--Western, Sci-Fi, Fantasy, Regency, Contemporary, Horror, Medieval, Prehistorical, and so forth...but the MAIN category must remain focused on building some sort of romance between SS/HG (mildly romantic or downright smutty or some combination thereof).
6. The number of "chapters" should be at least 5, though the chapters can be as short as 100 words, or as long as 10,000. (There shall be no limit to the size of the story, but it would be really, really nice if you finished it, and didn't abandon it...)

7. Severus and Hermione must kiss at least 3 times, though it doesn't have to be voluntarily at first. Greater levels of passion are at the author's discretion, but nothing lesser will be accepted.

8. The **Deadline for this Challenge** (submitting the \*first\* chapter) will be **February 17th, 2007**, because it's my birthday, and I want to read some nice prezzies from all the fine writers here at WIKTT. If there's lots of enthusiasm, I'll definitely consider extending the deadline.

9. Feel free to use other HP characters to fill out the various supporting cast roles. CAVEAT: If you decide to place this into a specific genre, such as the Anita Blake series (by Laurell K. Hamilton...mmm, Severus as Jean-Claude...), please be mindful that some fanfic sites do not allow crossover-fics to be posted on their boards (for example, Ashwinder or RestrictedSection.org).

10. Suggested (but not required) phrases to be included in the story:

-- "You ripped my bodice!" "Well, it is a bodice ripper!"

-- "...I miss my cat." (because I like Crookshanks) OR "...I miss my pussy." Feel free to form jokes from this second line, if you like.

-- "You know, we are a witch and a wizard; we can cast anti-gravity charms back on the planet. We didn't have to go into outer space to just float around the room together."

-- "Why are you wearing neck-bolts?" "They go with my school tie!"

-- "You realize, of course, that the memory of you in makeup, high heels and tights will make an excellent Pensieve-based blackmail opportunity." "I would think you would realize that in this era, it is very manly to wear...makeup, high heels, and... I look like a bloody ponce, don't I?" "A bloody ponce with kissable red lips and gorgeous, sexy legs. You really should wear heels and skintight pants more often." "I should?" "Yes; you have very lickable calves."

-- "Please, let this not be a Betty Neels plot! For once, I'd like to have the chance to actually shag the hero!" (Or "...shag the heroine!", depending on who is doing the pleading.)

-- "You can't fall in love with me! I'm supposed to be the villain! Don't you see my black clothes? The villain always wears the black clothes! I can't be the bloody hero!" "It's called an anti-hero, Severus, and they're very popular among the ladies, these days. You should know the type--the bad-boy who turns out to be good, deep down inside? You're practically the poster-boy!"

-- "Oh, dear god--it's a Mary Sue!" "A what?" "A Mary Sue! A super-character invented by hack writers to create a too-powerful, too-perfect fictional character. It's the sort of person the writer secretly wants to be, and yet no one else wants to read about! At least, not without feeling the urge to mangle the book!"

-- Anybody who can work in the line from that other WIKTT Challenge, "--You are unbelievable!" gets extra brownie points!