

Unintended Consequences

by *Wolfpack89*

Severus is lonely. Hermione is confused. What happens when a student's spell goes astray?

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Chapter 1 of 1

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AN: This is my first attempt at fanfiction. All reviews are appreciated. I am American, so Brit-picking is also appreciated. This is a fluffy little one-shot that is my version of what I would have wanted for an epilogue. All characters are property of J.K. Rowling. No compensation has been received by me. Credit goes to Debjunk for her story "Surprise Kisses" for giving me the idea to turn this around.

Professor Severus Snape, powerful wizard, former spy, former Death Eater, current Potions master at Hogwarts, was lonely. As he contemplated this rather annoying circumstance, he gently swirled the 25-year-old Scotch in his glass. Lonely. Of all the ridiculous, childish, wasteful emotions there could be, he had to be lonely. Fucking hell. He drained the glass. He had been alone for almost all of his life; he was unwanted by his parents, hated by his schoolmates, repulsive to women and generally disliked by everyone except for Lily Evans of course. Naturally he had repaid that favor by calling her an unspeakable name and then ensuring she would be killed by a genocidal maniac. Fan-bloody-tastic. He refilled the glass from the decanter on the sideboard.

When he had returned to Hogwarts five years previously, it had been a surprisingly easy decision to make. He had never liked teaching particularly, much less teaching hormonal teenagers, but his employment options had been limited. Apparently "Minion" on your resume was frowned upon, as was killing your last employer despite circumstances. After Nagini's bite and Minerva's timely intervention, he had spent a year at St. Mungo's and then another year recovering at Spinner's End. That had depleted what little savings he had managed to hide from the Dark Lord during the war. He had then started his own potion-making business, but that had proved as unsatisfying as teaching. Demanding customers, ridiculous requests and general ignorance by the wizarding public made him want to cast Unforgivables on a routine basis. He had realized then that potions research was the only occupation with which he was truly happy. Unfortunately research requires four things: a brilliant mind, time, money and facilities. The second two were the problem. He just didn't have the space at Spinner's End to create a proper research lab, and he didn't have the funding to procure better quarters and supplies. Therefore, when Minerva came begging for his return, he silently rejoiced while keeping his customary sneer in place. Although teaching had its drawbacks, he could quite frankly do it with his eyes closed and one arm tied behind his back. With his old dungeon quarters, he had a splendid lab, and Minerva's desperation ensured a generous research budget. So the prodigal son had returned. And he found himself tonight sitting in his quarters in front of a generous fire, drinking Scotch and becoming maudlin.

Feeling lonely wasn't a new emotion of course. He had frequently felt lonely during his childhood. Once he had turned his life tits up by becoming a Death Eater; however, he had never had time to feel lonely. Turning spy for the light and waging a war while teaching full time and serving two megalomaniacs had wiped out any semblance of a normal life. For those twenty-odd years, he hardly had time to eat or sleep much less feel a pointless emotion like loneliness. Now it had returned. And the cause of it was ridiculous. Hermione Granger: Charms mistress at Hogwarts, former member of the Golden Trio, brightest witch of her age and all that. She had returned to Hogwarts two years ago and turned his world upside down.

She had changed. Of course everyone changes as they grow from child to adult, so that was no surprise. What was so surprising was how her changes affected him. Gone was the buck-toothed, annoying little chit who was constantly tromping all over his last frayed nerve. What there was now was a lovely woman with a quiet, thoughtful

manner and a brilliant mind. A powerful witch who cared for her students, although she had let go of her youthful fanaticism (for which the house-elves were grateful). She had joined the faculty after completing her Charms mastery and then trying her hand at the Ministry. She had realized that government, no matter how well intentioned, will never move at the speed she requires and will never have the same work ethic she does. Teaching had allowed her to make her own decisions and to have a positive impact on the students immediately, not after years of debate and skepticism. She was a natural.

The students had mixed feelings. Most liked her but not the amount of work she required in her beloved subject. She was relentless and demanding, not unlike Severus himself. He was a much better teacher after the war. Now that he was no longer required to prefer certain students and torture others, he was much more forthcoming with praise and far less angry. He was still demanding, sarcastic and intimidating, but no longer terrifying. Even Professor Longbottom considered him a good teacher nowadays, although Neville would never forget his previous experiences at the hand of the Greasy Git.

When she had been hired, Professor Granger had taken the seat at the High Table next to Severus. This was something of a tradition, as Severus always had the end seat and the newcomers always sat the furthest from the Headmaster. The only exception over the years had been Lockhart since Dumbledore was quick enough to realize that Severus would likely poison the idiot at the first chance he had. Otherwise, it was considered a rite of passage for each new hire to "survive Snape" for the first year or two until another seat opened up. Severus had suffered all kinds over the years, from nutters like Quirrell to constant whiners like Vector. Granger was the first perfect mealtime companion. She was completely silent at breakfast until after her second cup of coffee was consumed (thank Merlin), and she was not overly talkative during the other two meals of the day. She respected Severus' moods and adjusted her interaction appropriately. She could converse on practically any topic knowledgeably, she understood and appreciated sarcasm, and she had a disgust for the *Daily Prophet* to match his own. It was heaven. With Hermione's patience and Severus' more relaxed personality due to the lack of psychopaths in his life, their tentative friendship grew and thrived.

It wasn't until a week ago that there was a problem. He was blissfully ignorant, striding through his days like he had for so many years, preventing cauldron explosions and taking house points, until he walked into Hermione's office on a Friday afternoon and was hit by the proverbial Hogwarts Express. He had been planning to speak with her on some seventh-year student projects that involved both Potions and Charms. He frequently visited her in her office, and she in his. They had even occasionally taken tea together, discussing their respective research projects and merrily griping about dunderheads. But on that day when he walked in, he found Professor Granger bent over at the hips, organizing teaching materials that she kept in wooden bins around the walls of the classroom. She had taken off her teaching robes and was wearing rather snug-fitting black trousers along with a starched white blouse and moderately high heels. All in all, an ordinary outfit for a teacher. But her position, with her very nice arse thrust into the air, combined with her long legs, stopped Severus in his tracks. She didn't hear him enter her office and kept fiddling with items in the bin. She was humming tunelessly and swaying from side to side. Severus Snape, who hadn't had a proper erection in over 20 years, was immediately hard and aching in his trousers. His prodigious mind, which could analyze three or four complex issues at once, went almost completely blank. All he could think, as his traitorous libido roared through him, was that he wanted her. Now. In every way possible.

Luckily after a moment, he realized how completely inappropriate his thoughts were, and he used every Occlumency skill he had ever possessed to reign in his imagination. When Hermione turned and spotted him, he was back in control. Teaching robes covered a multitude of sins, including a bloody circus tent in his trousers, thankfully. He had a brief conversation with her and hastily beat a retreat back to the dungeons. Merlin's hairy arse! He was attracted to his colleague and a former student! This was completely unacceptable. Not to mention the fact that he was mooning after a girl 20 years younger than him, who was attractive and brilliant and could have her choice of partners. He was being ridiculous. A nasty, ugly old man like himself had no business panting after her. Disgusting pervert. He shuddered. He had turned into one of his worst nightmares, a pathetic old man. He thought briefly about quitting, resigning his post and leaving Hogwarts, possibly Britain altogether. Surely he could find a post somewhere; was Durmstrang hiring? No, Minerva would have his head on a platter. He had managed to bring things under control earlier, so surely he could manage going forward, now that he had knowledge of his weakness. He spent the weekend avoiding Professor Granger (as he now forced himself to call her in his mind rather than the familiar Hermione) and polishing up his Occlumency. He could do this. He could be a friend and colleague with her and keep his feelings to himself. He would certainly get over his attraction with time. It was just that he hadn't been around many young attractive women in his line of work. That was it.

So here he was, a truly pathetic man, sitting in front of the fire a week later. He contemplated a third Scotch but realized that the only thing worse than an old pervert was a drunken old pervert. His feelings towards Professor Granger, rather than diminishing, had grown exponentially. Now, his cock jumped to attention whenever she entered the room (thank Merlin again for teaching robes). All he could think about was her and at night he had dreams so explicit that he had to Tergeo his sheets every morning before the house elves could find the evidence of his nocturnal activities. And, worst of all, he was lonely. He had taken to avoiding Professor Granger as much as possible, and that meant no more lovely conversations over luncheon and no more discussions of magical theory over tea. He missed it. He missed her, in addition to absurdly wanting her. She was the first person to genuinely seek out his company since Lily. He grimaced into his glass. After Lily died, he had mourned for months before realizing that what he mourned was the loss of the only person to ever care about him, even though she hadn't cared enough to forgive him. With her death he was completely and utterly alone. Now, twenty-odd years later, he had lost his second friend. Lost due to his ridiculous libido and his inability to control his emotions. Fucking pathetic.

Hermione Granger was content. Well, mostly content at any rate. She had a wonderful career, good friends, satisfying research... The one thing she didn't have was a love life. Not that she couldn't live without it, mind you; it was just that she had thought she had finally found the missing piece in her puzzle. A missing piece that she never would have imagined she would find at Hogwarts. In the dungeons. Teaching Potions. It was ironic, really. Never in a million years would she have thought of Severus Snape as a possible love interest. Who would think that he would turn out to be a completely fascinating man? She had been concerned when she first joined the faculty that he would hate her. It was logical really since she had spent her school years setting him on fire, throwing him against walls, stealing from his potions stores, etc. Instead he had been... not welcoming exactly, but accepting.

He wasn't the same as he was when Voldemort was alive, of course. Who was? He was quieter, less angry, less stressed to the point of homicidal tendencies. He actually smiled every now and again, and she had once even heard him laugh. It was at a comment she made about Minerva's millinery, and when he chuckled, she had thought it was the most marvelous thing she had ever heard. She wanted to hear it again on a regular basis in fact. She found herself wanting to see him, waiting to hear his step in the corridor outside the staffroom, waiting to ask him how his day had been. She wanted to look at him. He wasn't as sallow and tired looking as he had been during the war. Frankly he looked younger now than he had ten years ago. He had a crooked little smile that was just adorable, and when she realized that she had actually thought the word "adorable" in connection with Severus Snape, she knew she was a goner. When she caught herself trying to imagine his naked arse while walking behind him in the corridor one day, she knew she was pathetic.

Pathetic because he obviously had no interest in her. At first she had thought she was getting somewhere with him. He seemed to enjoy her company, seemed to want to see her. She had taken things very slowly knowing that, first, he was a colleague and workplace romances are difficult at best and, second, he was a very private man and would not respond well to being pursued 'round the castle by a besotted female. She had hoped that they could become friends, then good friends and then hopefully something with a physical component (it had been a while). They had just about gotten to the good friends step, and then everything stopped about a week ago. Literally. Now he avoided her like she was Typhoid Mary. He barely spoke to her at meals and then only to ask that she pass the salt or some such. She wanted to scream. The first man she had met who had all of the qualifications on her list: brilliant, powerful magically, tall, handsome, a sense of humor (and a sarcastic one at that), who could appreciate her research and understand her chosen career (and lived in the same castle, for fuck's sake). What had she done wrong? Had he realized that she was interested in him and was attempting to put her off? Did he still have feelings for Lily Potter? She would never be able to compete with the memory of a perfect woman of course; who could? She didn't think there was anyone else since the only owls he received were carrying work-related mail.

Oh, Merlin, did he find her repulsive because she was a former student? That could be the case. And she had done all that stealing and fire setting and such. God, she was such crap with men. Most of the issues in the past had been to do with the fact that she just didn't feel passionate about most wizards. She had loved Ron of course, but that had faded as soon as they left school and he made it clear he wanted a wife who would stay home and make babies. Urgh. Not what she wanted out of life. He was now happily married to Lavender Brown with a second child on the way. A couple of failed relationships while she was in the Ministry, a couple of quick hook-ups while on holiday. That was the extent of her experience. Pathetic. No wonder he wasn't interested. But even if he wasn't interested in a relationship, couldn't they at least be friends? She missed Severus. Just having a conversation with him, listening to his wonderful voice as he explained some point of his research, or argued a point of magical theory. Anything, really. She could listen to him read the instruction manual to a Muggle dishwasher and be enthralled.

She dropped her head to her desk and thumped her forehead on the wooden surface a couple of times. It felt a bit good, in fact. Ever since that accident in class today, she had felt a little light headed. It was a stupid accident, really. David Hopkins, a fifth-year Gryffindor, had sent a hex towards Stephen Phillips, a fifth-year Slytherin (why they

persisted in pairing up those two houses, Hermione would never understand). The two had been sparring off and on for several weeks over Sophie Barrett, a fifth-year Hufflepuff with some rather obvious "attributes." This time David's curse had narrowly missed Stephen, hitting Hermione in the back instead. She had felt the sharp flare of magic when it happened, and when she spun around, David was pale and obviously frightened. When she asked what the hex had been, he had stuttered and eventually confessed that it was a Stinging Hex, although Hermione was sure he was lying. Since no purple tentacles or excessive salivation had appeared, she had shrugged it off as something that had obviously not worked and gone about her business, sending David to Argus Filch for detention for a week. Now she felt a bit dizzy, and she hadn't stopped thinking about Severus all afternoon. She needed to see him. Maybe if she talked to him, she could get an idea what had happened to make him become so distant. Yes, that was a good idea. She would go to his quarters, start a general conversation and see what she could find out. She missed him. It was important to go see him right now.

Severus was interrupted in his contemplation of the fire by a knock on his door. He sighed. It was probably a Slytherin with some sort of problem. Maybe the Phillips boy; he had heard that he was fighting again with Hopkins today. Stupid boys. Wouldn't they ever figure out that the Barrett chit was mooning over a seventh-year? Idiots. He flung open the door, prepared to deliver a scathing lecture to the little fuckwit, when he realized that it was Hermione, of all people. His mouth opened and he started to ask her what she was doing there, when suddenly she lunged towards him, wrapped her hands around the back of his neck and kissed him full on the lips. It was a hard, impatient kiss, but to Severus it was like the sun had come out and its warmth was flowing into his body. He felt her fingers in his hair, her soft lips on his, her lovely body pressed up against him. His cock twitched and hardened in response. Before he could return the kiss, Hermione suddenly released him, pushed against his chest and stepped back. He was startled, and his first thought was disappointment that he hadn't had the opportunity to explore the kiss further. But when he looked at Hermione's face, he saw a look of utter shock and disbelief changing quickly to embarrassment. Her hands flew to her face. "Oh, my God, I can't believe I just did that!" She dropped her hands and spread them out like a thief suddenly caught, proclaiming innocence. Her eyes were wide with shock. "I have no idea what got into me!" she cried. Then like a startled deer, she spun and ran out the door. Severus was so shaken by the whole experience that he stood frozen and watched her disappear through the adjoining classroom door.

Severus came out of his startled state with a muttered curse and a slam of his door. He paced back to the sideboard and poured another Scotch. Of all things to be practically accosted by the object of his desires and then pushed away and humiliated. It was probably some stupid prank or dare that she had made with her adolescent friends. That was the only reason she could possibly have to kiss him in the first place, and then her reaction after certainly made her embarrassment clear. "That little bitch!" He swore, tossing back the Scotch and reaching for the bottle. He knew he was an ugly specimen; he had certainly been told by enough witches over the years to be certain of that fact, but he didn't deserve to be taunted and humiliated for it! He flung his glass into the fireplace, feeling satisfaction as the crystal shattered and the flames leapt. He started to throw the bottle as well, but something stopped him. A nagging thought which he started to push away with irritation, but then reconsidered. This was Hermione Granger who had kissed him. She was not the type of person to humiliate others. In fact she was quite the opposite. He knew that she had always corrected her friends when they used unkind names like "Greasy Git" or "Dungeon Bat" for him. She had never let anyone make fun of Hagrid either. Why would she suddenly submit to a dare or prank that would hurt someone, especially a colleague? It didn't make sense. He lowered the bottle back down and sank into his customary armchair. Why indeed?

Hermione ran down the hallway, feeling that choking sensation that precedes a bout of crying. She was so humiliated! What could have possibly come over her? One minute she was walking down to the dungeons, looking forward to seeing Severus, and the next she was latching onto him like a lamprey! The look on his face when she had come to her senses! Like she was Dolores Umbridge, or the Giant Squid or something equally appalling. Oh, God, what was she going to do? "OK, Hermione, get it together," she said to herself. She ducked into an empty classroom and sank down into the corner, wrapping her arms around her knees. "What just happened?" She thought about the compulsion that had come over her. As soon as she saw Severus, she felt an overwhelming need to kiss him. Immediately. There was no thought involved. Nothing could cause that sort of compulsion except magic. And then it hit her. The accidental hex from earlier that day. "Mr. Hopkins, you have some serious explaining to do, young man," muttered Hermione. She rose to her feet and set off towards the Gryffindor common room. Mr. Hopkins would likely have soiled himself if he had seen the expression on his professor's face at that moment. Luckily for him she had a little better control by the time she arrived at the portrait of the Fat Lady.

After much spluttering and denial, David Hopkins had finally admitted that the spell he had cast in her classroom was NOT a Stinging Hex. It was a spell, found in an old book of love spells, that caused the target to focus on the object of his or her affections and then, when in the presence of the object, to be irresistibly drawn to kissing them. David had thought that he might cause Stephen to make a fool of himself with Sophie by constantly accosting her. Hermione had David show her the lurid purple book he had found the curse in and was even more appalled by the solution to her dilemma. The counter-curse involved having the object of affection (in this case Severus, although Hermione would never admit that to David) tell the target (in this case Hermione) exactly how he felt about her. He had to tell the absolute truth, or the spell would continue, and Hermione would be compelled to kiss him each and every time she saw him. Hermione had humiliating visions of throwing herself at Severus across the High Table in the Great Hall during dinner and shuddered. Oh, well, at least this way she would know one way or another how he felt about her. Surely he would tell the truth if he knew it would prevent a humiliating display. She confiscated the book, *Ye Olde Lurve Spelles* by Fillippia Flagrante, from David and added another week of detention to his previous sentence, plus an essay of not less than three feet of parchment on why he should never cast unknown spells ever, ever again. Leaving David fervently regretting his actions, she went back to her quarters to write a note to Severus.

An hour later, Severus was interrupted from his continuing thoughts on why Hermione would kiss him by a house-elf delivering a message. He thanked the elf and opened a short scroll of parchment.

Dear Severus,

You are no doubt completely appalled by my display earlier this evening. I would like to explain my actions and hope that you will understand the circumstances. This afternoon David Hopkins and Stephen Phillips were in my classroom, and due to their ongoing dispute, David attempted to hex Stephen. The spell hit me by mistake and caused some unforeseen consequences. The spell (which David concealed from me until just now) is called Revelatio Amorrata, and the target of the spell is compelled to seek out and kiss the object of their affections. This is very awkward for me to tell you, but I have rather fancied you for the past few months, and it seems that this would make you the target of my attentions. It would also seem that the counter-curse requires you to tell me (face to face) exactly how you feel about me in order to release the spell. If you do not tell me the truth for any reason, the spell will continue. I realize that this is an enormous imposition on you, and I can assure you that I will not be upset or distressed in any way by anything you have to say to me. I am quite certain that you have no romantic feelings towards me, and I can assure you that I have no intention of letting my feelings towards you affect our working relationship in any way. Mr. Hopkins has been severely punished, and he has no idea that you are involved. I simply implied that I felt a bit strangely and that I needed to know what the spell was. After he revealed all, I told him that he must have cast it incorrectly because all I was thinking about was Sticky Toffee Pudding. He bought it. Could you possibly allow me to come back down to the dungeons and complete the counter-curse? I really think it would be for the best that I don't accost you more times than necessary. As it is please forgive the fact that I will be compelled to kiss you when I arrive.

Best Regards,

Hermione

Severus sat back in his armchair, flabbergasted. Hermione fancied him? That was surely impossible. It must just be some sort of lingering school girl crush on him. But that made no sense; she had hated him when she was a student. Oh, Merlin's saggy balls, he was going to have to tell her how he felt about her! A wave of sick humiliation swept over him. He was going to have to admit to a beautiful young witch that he was halfway in love with her and pathetically gagging for it when she was simply harboring some fleeting interest that she would have forgotten by teatime tomorrow if left to her own devices. Of all the nasty, humiliating, ridiculous things to have happen to him! He was going to kill that stupid Hopkins fuckwit. That idiot boy was going to cost him his sanity, his pride and possibly his career if Professor Granger decided to lodge a complaint about his leching after her. He kept up a steady stream of curses, many involving the flogging, burning and buggery of gods bedamned David Hopkins while he searched for a quill and parchment for his reply to Professor Granger.

Professor Granger,

I agree that this is a most regrettable situation. Thank you for not revealing my identity to Mr. Hopkins, although I am certain that he will find himself in much more difficulty in Potions in the foreseeable future. If you would care to proceed immediately to my quarters, I will do what I must for the counter-curse. I agree that the alternative would not be acceptable to either of us. I will await your arrival.

Professor Snape

Hermione scanned the reply nervously. Well, the good news was that this was all going to be over with soon. The bad news was that Professor Snape sounded highly unlikely to have any positive feelings towards her. So that was the end of their friendship and any other fantasies she might have. She sighed. Oh, well, that's what you get when you teach idiotic, hormonal teenage wizards. She grabbed the ridiculous spell book and headed out the door.

Severus had prepared himself as best he could. He had put on his teaching robes, to conceal any humiliating physical reactions. He had brushed his teeth and steeled himself for her kiss, remembering how quickly he had reacted to her earlier effort. He had attempted to compose in his thoughts exactly what he would say to her, being careful to be strictly true and yet not reveal any more than necessary. He would tell her that he found her physically appealing and that he considered her a friend and colleague. That should cover it. Hopefully she wouldn't understand that finding her "physically appealing" translated into the nearly uncontrollable urge to wrap his arms around her and explore her entire naked body with his hands and mouth while he... Oh, for Christ's sake, he was fantasizing about her again. That had to stop; she would be here momentarily.

Hermione steeled herself at the door to Professor Snape's quarters. She had brushed her teeth before she left her rooms, and she tried to focus her thoughts on keeping the kiss as straightforward and simple as possible. "No tongue, no tongue, no tongue," she kept chanting to herself. She straightened her jumper and knocked. When the door opened, her previous chant was discarded in favor of "Grab him, hold him, kiss him, yes!" and she found herself pressing shamelessly against Severus while she ran her hands through his beautiful hair and practically devoured him with her mouth. In the far reaches of her mind, she knew she should stop. But another part of her mind, that part which takes over when one was intoxicated, randy or both, told her to keep going and enjoy the moment. So she did. She kissed him with a fervor and intent that she had never before felt. She was under the spell, certainly, but she knew exactly what she was doing and who she was doing it with. And she loved it.

Severus felt all of his preparations go to utter hell as soon as she touched him. Her glorious body was pressed against him, and her soft lips devoured his. He lost all sense of time and space, and his thoughts all devolved into Neanderthal-like simplicity. "Want this, want this now!" was ringing in his ears as he felt her fingers in his hair and her breasts pressed against his chest. He wrapped his arms around her tightly, and he felt her tongue slide across the seam of his lips, and he opened eagerly, welcoming her into his mouth. She was warm and wet and tasted like every good thing he had ever known. He slid his own tongue into her mouth, and she suckled on it. He almost came in his trousers like a boy. It was the most incredible feeling in the world, and he never wanted it to end. Time ceased to exist for him, and he simply felt adrift in a warm sea of love and affection. He reveled in it and gave back every ounce that he was capable of. He ran his hands all over her glorious curves, and he squeezed and rubbed her arse shamelessly while he ground his hips against her and groaned with the sheer pleasure of it. She returned his actions with her own, moaning against his mouth while she plundered it with her tongue. She kneaded and stroked his back and shoulders and then slid her hands down to grip his arse. God, he never wanted this to end. He could die happy right at this moment. But eventually they had to come up for air, and they separated slightly, panting and looking dazed and disheveled. Severus knew he should stop, compose himself and stick with the plan he had made. But somehow, looking at Hermione and seeing how lovely she was, he realized what he had to do. "Hermione, I love you. I think I fell in love with you the moment you made that ridiculous joke about Minerva's hat. I don't deserve a woman like you. I'm an ugly old man, and I've done terrible things in my life. But when I look at you, all I can think about is how much I want to be with you. No one has ever loved me before, and I don't even dare to hope that you could learn to love me. But I have to tell you the truth, and even if you never kiss me again, just know that your kiss was the most wonderful thing that has ever happened to me."

Hermione stared at Severus. He was panting, his hair was wildly disheveled, his face was flushed, and his lips were red and slightly swollen from their kiss. He was the most lovely thing she had ever seen. And what he had just said. While it made her heart flip in her chest, it also made her want to cry, to curse the world that had kept this wonderful man from knowing what love could feel like. He had lived through so much, and so many people had ignored and slighted him, treated him like he was worth nothing. She could spend the rest of her life showing him what love was. She wanted that. "I love you, Severus. I think I fell in love with you the first time you smiled at me. I never thought you would have any interest in me because I was so horrible to you as a student. And if no one has ever loved you, then that just shows how incredibly dense witches can be because I think you're the most marvelous man in the world. And that kiss was the most wonderful thing that has ever happened to me too."

Before the week was out, the entire school knew that Professor Snape and Professor Granger were "together." Despite all efforts to the contrary, the secret was spilled by Peeves, of all entities. His happy, gibbering recital of how he found the two of them canoodling in the Restricted Section caused a sensation in the students as well as the faculty. After a disapproving Headmistress arranged for a meeting with the miscreants, she emerged with a smile and the happy announcement that the couple were engaged to be married. The ceremony occurred on the first day of summer holidays at the castle. Harry and Ginny Potter, Ron and Lavender Weasley and a small gathering of friends saw the couple off to their honeymoon in Greece.

And when they returned in September, a small lavender book that had been confiscated not so long ago took pride of place on the mantle.

The End