

Like Sands Through the Hourglass

by *Southern_Witch_69*

Finding a fictional story based on her life, Hermione is shocked and outraged. Unfortunately, before she can destroy it, she runs into Snape who forces her to let him read it, as he noticed his name on the parchment's pages.

Days of Our Lives

Chapter 1 of 8

Finding a fictional story based on her life, Hermione is shocked and outraged. Unfortunately, before she can destroy it, she runs into Snape who forces her to let him read it, as he noticed his name on the parchment's pages.

Disclaimer: I've swiped some of J.K. Rowling's characters and am having a bit of fun with them. I shall return them unhexed and clean when I'm done. Pity that I'm not making any Galleons though.

I'd like to thank my dear beta, Charmed Nay. She always finds time for the tales that I insist on telling. Cheers, love.

SW says: Over at my Yahoo!Group, Potter_Place, we've all compiled a list of things that we hate to see in a story. I'm going to do something a bit differently here in order to poke fun at them. I'm going to try to have a story within a story. I fear that I cannot divulge any more, as it would spoil the fun. I do hope you enjoy and follow along.

□

Hermione heard the snickering coming from the corner of the room, and when she looked up to see exactly what they were on about, the guilty parties, Sinistra and Hooch, quickly looked away, broad grins upon their faces. That could only mean that they were laughing at her somehow. But why? She'd not said a word to anyone all evening. She'd come in, sat near the fire, and pulled out a book to read. If this was the way they treated everyone, it was no wonder that Professor Snape chose some evenings to not appear in the staff room. She doubted that they'd ever snicker at him where he could see. Just as she'd decided to get up and leave, a swirl of black robes caught her attention in her peripheral vision.

The silky voice floated over to her as he greeted Professor Dumbledore. "Headmaster, I came as quickly as I could. There was a detention that I had to oversee first."

"Excellent. I have the parchments in my office. I'm afraid that I forgot to bring them with me. If you'll accompany me?"

"Certainly," Snape said with a nod, moving aside to allow Dumbledore to pass. At that moment, his eyes lifted and met hers. Though he didn't smile at her, she noticed that his scowl was less defined.

That made her feel a little better. When she'd accepted her teaching job, he was the one person she'd felt intimidated by. He wasn't acidic to her, not like he had been as her professor years earlier, but he wasn't warm either. She rarely saw him quite warm with anyone, save the older staff members and only on certain occasions. She supposed it went by what mood he was in. Everyone was like that, so she couldn't really put him down for it. Eventually, they might become friendly or as friendly as could be expected amongst peers.

A whole new bout of laughter pulled her gaze from his. Sinistra had a hand over her mouth and was looking over at Snape while Hooch was doubled over and waving a thick stack of parchments in the air between them.

I ought to ask them what the bloody hell is so funny! Hermione thought in annoyance.

McGonagall made her way over to them and whispered something. The three women left, saying something about a nightcap in Minerva's quarters. As Hermione stood up to leave, she noticed that Hooch had forgotten the parchments. Looking around, Hermione saw that Flitwick was playing chess with Sprout, neither aware of anything other than their next move.

Slipping over to the parchments, Hermione quickly lifted them up and flipped through them. It seemed that someone was trying their hand at writing stories. The penmanship wasn't all that great, but she could make out enough to recognize a Wizarding tale of fiction. Just as she was about to toss the parchments back down, something caught her eye.

Ron's freckled hand lifted ever so slowly to gently wipe away the clear, salty tears that were pouring out of Luna's eyes like water from a faucet that was turned on full blast.

"What in the world?" she mused aloud. It seemed to be a story about people she knew...her old classmates!

She gasped when she flipped a few pages and saw another line.

Hermione couldn't contain her anger as she watched the rhythmic humping of Ron's white arse as it moved up and down with thrusts, making Luna cry out like one of those banshees who'd detected a shimmer that a death would be happening soon.

The writing was atrocious! She certainly hoped that neither Sinistra nor Hooch would write something so... juvenile! And her jealous of Ron and Luna? Certainly not! She'd been over Ron for a long time. The next page held something worse.

"But, Hermy, I didn't know you still loved me! I thought you went off with that Legolas bloke you met back in the time of Middle Earth when your Time-Turner messed up! Don't hex my bits off. I rather like them." Ron was very pale, and his spotty face was contorted in pain as he tried to protect his groin area and its large occupants.

"So do I," Luna put in, holding out her hands to help cover the treasured, thick, wide manhood she'd grown fond of, angering Hermione even more and making her see red wherever she turned to look.

"That wasn't Legolas I was talking to last night! That was Lucious Malfoy... er... Lucius, I mean," Hermione said, though her wand dropped to her side, which meant she wasn't going to hex them after all. "Fine. Be happy without me. There has to be someone for me out there."

Anger began to seep through her veins. This was wrong! Someone was using their lives as a form of entertainment. She would see the headmaster about this and find out exactly who had written such rubbish and see to it that some form of punishment was mete out.

Leaving the staff room in indignation, Hermione trudged up to the tower that held the headmaster's office intent on lodging her complaint. All the while her annoyance built. How dare Hooch and Sinistra, professors of Hogwarts, act in such a manner. If the writing was something that one of them had confiscated from a student, they should have had the decency to destroy it or at least to let her know. What did they do instead? They stood around reading it and laughing about it.

Hermione supposed that if it hadn't been about her, she could see the humor in it. However, that was not the case. "Ooof!" she yelled out suddenly as a tall dark shape slammed into her, knocking her down and pulling the air from her chest. The parchments went flying.

From her position on the floor, she saw the annoyed expression on Professor Snape's face. She closed her eyes and counted to five hoping he'd be gone when she opened them again. No. He was still there.

"Professor," she began, "I apologize for not looking where I was going. I was..." Her voice trailed away as he stooped down to pick up a parchment. This was not good. He would think that she'd written it. Groaning inwardly, she saw his expression change from a scowl to a shocked look to an angry snarl.

"What is the meaning of this?" he growled out, shaking the paper at her.

"I was just on my way to find out," she said, getting up, knowing he'd not offer to assist her. As he stooped to grab another parchment, she quickly flicked her wand to summon them all to her outstretched hand.

"How dare you!" he said in a dangerous voice. "Hand those over at once!"

"I will not!" she bit out. "I'm going to see..."

He looked down at the words before him on the single parchment he still clutched and read, *Professor Snape glided through the halls like a great black bat with greasy fur, only he had hair instead of fur...hair that the poor sod should really wash once in a while.* He crumpled the paper. "Did you write this?"

"No," she said, grabbing for the balled up paper. "As I was saying, I was on my way to the headmaster to report...what? What do you think you are doing?" she asked in horrified surprise as he grabbed her roughly by the arm and guided her to a nearby door, pushing her inside quickly before joining her and slamming the door behind him. Torches lit the room immediately, illuminating the full extent of his anger with their bright flames.

"I believe you are lying. While you may be on your way to the headmaster now...to save face now that you've been caught...I think you may have been off to either write more or to show someone else," he said quietly. "I fully intend to read through it and remove anything pertinent to me before you are able to do so."

"You know, Professor, I've always thought highly of you, aside from the time when we'd all believed you to have killed the headmaster, and I don't appreciate your tone or implications." She backed away from him when he reached for the parchments. "Madam Hooch and Professor Sinistra were looking at these and left them behind. I didn't particularly like that my name, like yours, was part of this rubbish. I am being completely misrepresented!"

He stood and gazed at her for a long moment. "The writing doesn't match your own; however, you could have used some sort of quill enabling a disguise." He gestured to the table and chairs in the corner of the room. "Shall we?"

"Shall we what?" she asked tartly, knowing he wanted to have a seat, but not wanting to give him an inch after what he'd said to her.

"I would like to have a seat and read through the parchments, taking out any pages that have something about me on them. You may take the rest and leave after that," he said firmly.

She thought this over and nodded. "All right. That seems fair enough. I suppose I'm not the only victim here. I rather loathed the idea of the personal lives of my friends and me depicted in such a manner." She moved towards the corner of the room. "Pity it's quite cold in here."

At that moment, a roaring fire lit the grate across the room. They both paused and looked at it in wonder.

"Sir, what is this room?"

He shook his head and went back to the door to find it locked. "Damn," he bit out. He retrieved his wand and flicked it at the door. "It's warded, and I cannot breach it."

"Great," Hermione said with a groan. "We might well die of thirst or starvation in here! This is all your fault..."

Bottles of wine, empty goblets, and plates filled with delectable morsels of food appeared on the table.

"You were saying?" Snape asked sarcastically.

She moved to the table, sat down, and poured herself a glass of wine. When he stared at her, she shrugged. "I am quite certain that you can seat and serve yourself, sir?" He said nothing, but she noticed the slight upward curl of his lips. She flicked her wand and ordered the parchments to right themselves in the order in which they were intended.

It might be a long night, she thought, gazing at the thick stack.

"Do you have any place to be this evening or in the morning?" he asked after taking a long sip from his drink.

"Actually, I don't. You?" she asked curiously.

"I happen to be free this weekend, though I doubt reading this will take too long." He pulled a plate of biscuits towards him. "Care for one?" he asked.

She nodded, and after he chose one, he slid the plate towards her.

"Thanks."

"Now," he began, "let's start at the beginning and see what this imbecile has written about us and those we know."

Southern's Notes: There are so many clichéd and cheesy things on my list that I intend to hit upon. This will be great fun. It's all plotted out in my head, and I'll be updating soon. Fear not, it's not going to be some long epic. Not at all. It's just a great break from my other story, which I will be posting soon.

And there will likely be someone waiting to let me know that the story Hermione and Snape reads from has horrible prose, wording, descriptions, etc. I agree. That's the point. Have a laugh, roll your eyes, and remember reading something similar at some point in the past! I know I've seen stuff just like it. Hehe!

As the Wizarding World Turns

Chapter 2 of 8

Hermione and Severus get comfortable and start to read the story she found, causing interesting reactions from both.

Disclaimer: I've swiped a few of J.K.R.'s characters for a bit, but I'll return them shortly through the Floo.

I'd like to thank my lovely beta, Charmed Nay, who always finds time for me and my tales.

"Ugh! Where to start?" Hermione said aloud while pulling the stack towards her.

"I do believe that I said that I wanted to go through those parchments," Snape said, grabbing the other side and trying to pull them towards him.

"No," she countered, "we are going to go through this together. I don't want you keeping it to yourself and have to watch you snicker and laugh like the others." She jutted her chin up slightly. "I am not above reading along with you... if you think you can manage it."

"Very well," Snape agreed. He raised an eyebrow when she didn't move. "I do believe you need to move your chair in this direction and bring the parchments if we are to read together."

"Why should I have to be the one to move?" she retorted. He was quite annoying! Why had she bothered hoping to become friendly with the man?

Before he could reply, a small whooshing sound drew their attention to the side of the room with the fire. A small couch appeared with two sconces hovering above it, lit and glowing brightly, and fluffy pillows and a blanket set on its inviting cushions.

"Why do I get the feeling that there is more to this room than meets the eye?" Snape pondered aloud, moving his chair back with a loud scraping noise. "Come along," he ordered as he grabbed his glass and the bottle of wine.

Hermione snatched another biscuit, her drink, and the parchments before going over to the couch. He'd already settled down on one side, leaving a space and the other side open. How could they read together at opposite ends of the couch? Shrugging, she sat down on her end, placing her wine on the small table that appeared next to her. When she realized that he hadn't budged or scooted closer, she gave him a falsely sweet smile and patted the space next to her. "Slide over if you'd like to read this."

Though he glared slightly, he moved closer, shoulder pressing awkwardly against hers.

She shifted to face him a little and spelled the parchments to hover between them so that they could read.

"Sir?"

"Yes?"

"I have to warn you that this will be... quite lewd. I've read a few sentences, and the scenes depicted may make you feel a little uncomfortable." Her cheeks reddened.

He nodded and confidently said, "I think that, being adults, we will be capable of reading something of this nature without being embarrassed." Even as he said it, two red splotches appeared on his cheeks. "Hopefully," he added as an afterthought.

"All right," she agreed.

"Ah, first... perhaps we should have a little more wine?" he asked, reaching for the bottle to fill their glasses. He snorted. "This bottle has been enchanted to never empty. Interesting."

"Well, we won't die of thirst at least."

"No, but possibly of intoxication," he said with a smirk. "However, I believe I can hold my own."

"I know better than to overindulge," she said cheekily, taking a large gulp of her drink. It's tangy flavor slid down her throat, warming her and making her feel as if she could easily cope with the task before them... and the professor.

Without another word, they began to read the story.

Like sands through the hourglass, so were the days of her life. Hermione Granger, cleverest, brightest, hottest witch of the age, wondered what her life would be like. Her relationship with Ronald Weasley, redheaded, freckle-faced, gangly sidekick to the sexy Boy-Who-Lived-And-Kicked-Some-Ass-Again, was faltering. She could feel it each time she looked at him.

"Ass?" Snape said incredulously, trying to push away the image of Potter beating his foot against a donkey's arse. "This is obviously an American who wrote this!"

"But that doesn't make any sense. There are no American exchange students here."

"What's that to do with anything?" he asked.

"Well, I'd hoped that either Sinistra or Hooch had confiscated this from a student. Surely they didn't have anything to do with its origins."

"Ha!" Snape said sarcastically. "You, apparently, don't know Rolanda very well."

"Well, no, not really. Everyone has been nice, but I've not really gotten too close to anyone." She shrugged. "I don't think Madam Hooch likes me very much, what since I don't like flying much."

"You don't?" he queried, shocked expression.

"It's all right, but I just think Apparition or Floo is much more practical and quicker." She blushed, for the second time in the space of a few minutes. "I've never been all that good at it. I suppose I never thought to try to be better at it because it seemed to be for pleasure. I figured that I knew better ways to please myself." Her eyes widened when she realized how that sounded. "Er... by reading, that is." She exhaled in relief when it seemed that he hadn't even noticed.

"The good part about flying, Professor Granger, is that you can soar above the ground, feel the wind in your hair, leave your probl..." He stopped abruptly. "To each his own, I suppose."

They looked back down at the story.

It wasn't that he was a poor bloke or lived in a hovel with his pitiable family and their pesky ghoul. It wasn't that his arse had taken a turn for the skinny side...she preferred a beefy arse, something a girl could grab and knead and feel the cushiony flesh in her delicate palms. It was the damned Time-Turner incident!

"Ridiculous!" Snape thundered. "Do you see that inconsistency? They've used ass and arse."

"I hope they don't plan on getting published," she huffed. "And how dare they say that I like beefy arses! Why, I..." Her voice trailed away as she noticed his stare. "What?"

He crossed his arms over his chest. "Well? Do you?"

"I suppose they are all right, but there is nothing wrong with a, ah, smaller arse, now is there?" She cringed internally. She would hex the writer for this. Seeing the amusement on his face, she asked, "What about you?"

Surprised, he stammered, "We-well... I suppose the arse depends upon the person it belongs to."

"Oh, come now, Professor," Hermione said sarcastically, forgetting her nervousness. "You are a man!"

"How nice of you to notice," he said casually. "Did it take you all these years to reach that brilliant deduction?"

"Come off it!" she said. "You know what I mean. Are you saying that you don't care about a woman's outward appearance or even if she's got a good arse? You only look on what she's got up here?" She pointed to her mind.

"Well, no, of course not. Naturally," he said in amusement. "I would never sit down next to some warty hag whom I thought to be intelligent."

Indignantly, Hermione said, "That's what I thought! You're just like the rest of them!"

Losing his slight smile and becoming serious, he said, "I am my own person and do not appreciate being defined by what other men feel or do." He uncrossed his arms and reached for his drink again, taking a sip. "I only mean that if I got to know a woman and liked her for whom she was, her arse wouldn't matter: be it big, small, or nonexistent."

Hermione dared not bring her eyes to meet his again, simply looking back at the parchment.

She'd been arguing with Ron about the way he still looked at Lavender Brown...that nasty whore...when she'd turned around to run off like an annoyed girl and roughly hit a stone wall instead, causing her Time-Turner to activate on its own, sending her back into the past. Time flew by as she'd watched helplessly. When her world had stopped spinning, she'd realized immediately that she wasn't at the Burrow anymore. No, she'd gone back to a time before time: a time of elves, dwarfs, wizards, men, hobbits, and orcs. She'd gone to Middle Earth!

A dwarf was snoring loudly, stroking his axe adoringly while sleeping, ratty beard twitching with the movements of his face. She tiptoed over him and then over the next body, who seemed to be a man...a very sexy man who had one hand on his hairy crotch and one on the hilt of a sword.

She knew that she would be ravished and made to do unthinkable things if they woke and saw her, so she moved to the opening of the cave. The moment she stepped outside, there was a blur of long, pale hair and pointy ears, leaving her to face the tip of the arrow belonging to the elf before her. Legolas.

Unable to help herself, as she somehow heard the need of his unspoken words, she began disrobing and offered herself to him...some magical spurt allowed her to suddenly become a natural Legilimens who not only saw thoughts but could also read them. He was worried about an ensuing battle that would be happening as soon as the men of Rohan joined them. Legolas hungrily looked at her body and accepted her offering.

"Bloody hell!" Hermione exclaimed. "That's preposterous! Time-Turners only go back a few hours, not centuries! And I would never just... It's absurd!"

"I've read about these characters already. Tolkien? The fellow that wrote The Lord of the Rings and The Hobbit?"

"The same," she said with a sharp nod, chest still heaving in indignation. Without meeting any resistance, she flipped through the next couple of pages. "It's all rubbish about how I used a Disillusionment Spell, remained as a secret lover to Legolas that only he knew about, and helped them win against the Great Eye by whispering strategies to Aragorn before Lord Celeborn was able to magic me back to my time with an elfish gadget." She flipped a few more pages. "Ah, it appears that Legolas followed me home after all his mates went into the west. Since we were back in my time, I opted to be faithful to Ron again, leaving Legolas the chance to go off with Lavender."

Severus shook his head. "Perhaps we can skip over that and begin reading anew?"

"Agreed."

So, yes, Hermione knew that she'd have to eventually end things with Ronald even if she loved him dearly and had given up Legolas to make him happy. She'd lived an entire year away from him while only a few seconds had passed in his world. Therefore, that made her another whole year older than he and Harry. The first extra year older was accumulated during her Time-Turner usage in her third year at Hogwarts.

Suddenly, a flash of long, platinum blond, elegant, silky hair drew her from her musing. Her heart pounded as she thought of Legolas. However, she was surprised...both pleasantly and horrifiedly...to find that it was Lucius Malfoy.

"Is that even a word? Horrifiedly?"

"I think they are not only taking liberties with our lives but with the English language," Severus said. "And what is with those horrid descriptions? Silky hair? Malfoy's hair is very coarse to the touch, I'll have them know!"

"Oh?" Hermione asked in amusement. "Been touching his hair lately?"

He glared at her in annoyance and didn't answer her.

"Oh, Lucius! What ever do you mean by coming here while I am home alone... at night... in the dark?" she asked, biting her lower lip so that a small amount of blood made its way to the surface and glinted in the silvery moonlight.

Stepping closer, Lucius lowered his head, tongue darting out to catch the droplet of blood. "Mmmm."

"Why, I didn't know you liked the taste of a... Muggle-born!" she said cheekily, moving back.

"I've suddenly developed the power to feel a person's emotions. I was taking a stroll down on the street, and I was overwhelmed with what you were feeling, and even though I am normally a nasty, Death Eater git who adores raping, pillaging, and harming children, I felt the need to come to you, to touch you, to make you my own if only for this night."

"Yes, I need you this night. Ronald and I aren't getting on well. I think he's been Floo-calling someone else anyway!"

Lucius nodded. "As I entered, he was leaving with a dreamy-eyed, blonde woman. I am sorry." He patted her on the back. "There, there, my dear." Suddenly, his nose was next to her hair. "Sweet," he murmured. "Such smooth, long and wavy hair. I've always adored it from the moment I first met you, even though you were only near twelve."

"Long and wavy? Smooth?" Severus questioned with a snort. "That mess?" He chuckled as her expression darkened.

"Perhaps my character has had the good taste to use Sleekeazy's or some other product! You know, there is a company called Vanity that's been selling products. Maybe she's bought some!"

"Why haven't you?" he questioned.

"Because I'm happy with my hair, and I shouldn't have to change it to please others," she said in irritation. "There are more important things." Wanting to be as rude as he, she asked, "Why don't you buy any of those products?"

He straightened slightly, offended. "Well, I suppose I'm of the same mind as you on that subject. I feel it unnecessary."

Feeling guilty, she blurted, "It doesn't look bad on you. It suits you." She wanted to roll her eyes. Why the hell did she say that it suited him? That in itself might be an insult, depending on how he took it. She smiled innocently as his narrowed eyes gazed at her.

"I suppose I could say the same for you," he relented momentarily. "But I won't."

That bastard! she fumed internally. She wanted nothing more than to dump her wine on top of his head, giving his hair a dousing, but she decided to down it instead and then hold her empty glass out for him to fill, which he did without a word.

"Lucius, where is your wife? Will she not miss you this night?" Hermione asked, thinking of the haughty, rude, arrogantly beautiful wife the man had.

"Narcissa," he began, voice catching, "has been seeing another man."

"Oh, I am so sorry," she said, putting a hand on his shoulder while using her other hand to move one of his down to her breasts.

He began rubbing soothing circles through her lacy, silky, satiny nightie...he could probably see through the skimpy thing if the lights were on...causing her large, soft, melons to tingle, each peak standing at attention like a flower trying to get sunlight, fruit ripe for the picking... er... for the sucking in this case.

"It's quite hard for me," he said, continuing his touches even as their clothes suddenly melted away. "It's my best friend that she's taken to seeing. One who's been there with me through thick and thin. Why, I was with him for his first rape, guiding him, joining him. I mentored him properly, showed him how to command attention and escape being scratched by the victim's fingernails." He shook his head sadly. "I don't know how Severus could do this to me."

Snape roared angrily, "How dare this halfwit author imply that I would bed Narcissa!"

Hermione scooted away from him, partly afraid he'd explode in his rage. His fists were clenched so tightly that his knuckles were white, and it looked like spit was flying from his mouth.

"I have never touched her in all the years that I've known her! Lucius would know better than to believe such rubbish!" he said crossly.

"Professor, it's only a story," Hermione said, hoping to soothe him.

His angry eyes landed on hers. "If I find out that you had anything to do with this... if there is some plan to make me look like..." He took a deep breath in attempt to collect himself, unclenching his fists. "There were no rapes or anything of the kind. To think that someone would actually write that angers me!"

"I don't like it either," she put in quickly. "At least they don't have you on your knees in front of him." She nodded to the parchment where he could see that it was indeed

what the character Hermione had done to ease Lucius' disappointment. She hoped that her embarrassing situation would relax him.

"As if that would happen anyway!" he said resentfully. "Lucius and a..."

"A what?" Hermione asked, ire building.

"Lucius and a girl your age," he said swiftly.

"You were going to call me a Mudblood, weren't you?" she asked loudly. "I can see it in your eyes!"

"You insufferable little brat," he said in annoyance. "I meant to say that Lucius has always doted on his wife and would never take part in some extramarital scandal or allow her to do so." He looked down at his robes and smoothed some of the rumples absently. "I wouldn't call *you* a Mudblood."

"Maybe this isn't such a good idea, Professor," she said, mollified and feeling silly for jumping to conclusions. However, part of her wondered if he was being honest. The snide tone he'd been using had led her to believe that he was going to say something hurtful.

He filled his glass with wine again and topped off hers. After he placed it back on the table next to him, he flipped over a couple of pages, skimming them.

"Quite an encounter with Lucius," he commented, brow raised. "Ah, it looks as if you've had second thoughts about Weasley now and have gone to tell him so. The problem is," he said with a smirk, "is that Miss Lovegood has him in her clutches."

"I skimmed some of that already," she said before taking a sip of her wine. "Rubbish. All of it."

"It seems that this writer holds Mr. Weasley's... nether region in high regards. Perhaps he's had a part in writing this, or maybe it's someone who enjoys his company who wrote it?" Snape offered.

"Ha!" Hermione said sarcastically. "Anyone who's been with him knows that he hasn't much down there to... Oh, my... Oh, I didn't mean to say that..."

He waved away her apology. "It's all right. I will not repeat a word of this." Sitting back and grinning nastily, he commented, "It figures he wouldn't be well endowed. I rather think that suits him just fine, the bumbling idiot."

Feeling bold, Hermione held up her thumb and index finger, measuring out a space of a couple of inches between them. "This might sum that up for you... since you seem interested." She was rewarded with deep, rich laughter as he threw back his head and laughed heartily. Her cheeks flushed, as she'd realized exactly how much she'd just told him as to how intimate she'd been with Ron in the past. Part of her also felt a bit guilty about disclosing something so personal. "I shouldn't have done that," she added, reminding herself of Hagrid. Her entire body felt warm, and her head felt light. It had to be the wine.

"Not all men are blessed in that department," he said, laughter ebbing away.

Unfortunately, Hermione's eyes drifted down to his midsection in an instinctual reaction, as if trying to see if he'd been blessed. She tore her eyes away and felt the heat rise in her face. Not wanting to look at him, she sipped on her wine and looked back at the parchment.

"Looks like the chapter has finally come to a close," she said. "Hermione has left Ron and Luna to it in order to search for the perfect man for her. Would you like to go on to the next chapter?"

"I think I might like to stretch a little." He stood and shook away his stiffness.

"I wish there was a loo..." At that moment, a door appeared. "Well, I suppose that's it." She nodded to the doorway. "I'll be right back." To her surprise, he strode forward.

"Let me make certain." He opened the door, looked inside, and then turned back to her. "Seems all right."

"Thanks," she said slipping past him and closing the door. Upon looking in the mirror, she noticed that she seemed to be glowing, eyes alight with mirth, smile curling her lips upward. "Perhaps he's not so bad. I'll just have to learn to deal with his snappish attitude." She hoped that the rest of the story wouldn't continue to be so bad, and she wondered how he played a part in it. She knew he'd make an appearance, as he'd read that sentence about himself earlier. She paused for a moment. "God, what if the person has paired us together?"

Shaking her head, she laughed lightly. "Of course not. Everyone knows that Snape and I haven't anything in common. Then there is the age difference. *That didn't stop them from putting you with Lucius Malfoy*, a voice nagged. "Bloody hell."

Southern's Notes: Heehee... Sorry, Hermione, but this author certainly would pair you with Snape. Muahaha! This is quite fun. And if there are any oddities that you'd like to see, let me know. I've not touched upon even half the list yet, so I have some more "goodies" coming.

Another Wizarding World

Chapter 3 of 8

The story has a new twist. Will Hermione and Snape be able to read on comfortably?

Disclaimer: I'm just borrowing a few characters from J.K.R. I'll return them shortly.

I'd like to thank my dear beta, Charmed_Nay, for always finding time for me.

Severus frowned. *Just what could be taking her so long? Surely she'd been in there long enough to do anything she might have needed to do by now. Perhaps I should go knock on the door.* As he moved forward, the door clicked open. She looked a little pale.

"Are you all right? I was about to check on you," he said, keeping his voice cool and eyeing her speculatively.

"Oh, I was just thinking about... trying to see if there was any way out of there besides the door that opens into this room," she said quickly.

He could tell that she wasn't being completely honest by the shifty look in her eyes and the sudden flush on her cheeks. However, he wasn't about to demand that she recount all that she'd done while in the privacy of the room.

"There is some tea. I was just thinking about fixing a cup to counter the wine that I've had," he said by way of asking if she'd like a cup. She understood, nodding and moving towards the table.

As she poured herself a cup, he watched her shaky hands and the way she closed her eyes to try to calm herself. Perhaps she was more upset about the story than he'd thought. While it angered him, he wasn't going to get too worked up about it. Well, he hadn't appreciated the portion about the Malfoys. That was just completely wrong. Lucius would never stray from Narcissa to comfort a... Hermione Granger. That alone was preposterous. While he'd coveted Narcissa in his youth, he'd never acted inappropriately with her. He respected her too much, and for this author to dare allude to anything other than that was disrespectful towards her. There had only ever been one other woman that he'd respected as much. Unfortunately, she met her demise many years before.

"I asked if you wanted me to pour yours for you? You're just standing there," Granger said.

"Yes, you can," he said distractedly.

Feeling suddenly uncomfortable, he motioned for her to follow him to the couch where he took his cup from her. Once they were back in their respective seats, he sipped his tea and tried to think about the story they were reading. The entire thing felt as if it had been orchestrated. Hooch and Sinistra just happened upon the parchments and left them in Granger's view? Not very likely. The headmaster had claimed to have something important to show him from the Ministry pertaining to a patent he'd applied for. The papers had mysteriously vanished. The room they were currently in was quite convenient as well.

His thoughts darkened considerably. *I'd better not find out that this is some matchmaking scheme*, he thought angrily.

"I think it's a bit sour, too," she said, breaking through his thoughts.

"What was that?"

"Your face. Looks like you don't like the tea, what with that scowl. I thought it was because you don't like the tea either," she said sheepishly.

"Shall we start the story again?" he asked, choosing not to comment on her question.

"All right," she said, putting her cup aside and flicking her wand towards the parchments again.

Severus moved a tad closer to get a better look.

Dejectedly and gloomily, Mya made her way through block after block on the sidewalks of Muggle London. She knew that there would be more for her in life...even though she was a bushy-haired girl with big teeth.

"Well, I have no idea what they mean by putting this person into the story," Granger said in confusion. "Why is this Mya so sad? We've not even heard anything about her before now! They could at least give us a bit of back story. I mean to say, who is she anyway?"

Severus chuckled suddenly. "It's obvious to me who this Mya is," he said silkily, enjoying that he'd figured it out before she. "What I don't understand are these sidewalks. I suppose those are like small alleys on the sides of buildings that the Muggles walk along?"

"Oh, don't be silly. That's an Americanism again. They're talking about pavements." She crossed her arms over her chest, trying to appear intimidating. "And I'd like to know just who you think this Mya girl is."

He snorted. "Big teeth? Bushy hair?" At her lost look, he said incredulously, "Mya is a play on your given name: Her-MY-oh-knee. My-oh has simply become My-ah, or as they say, Mya." Smugly he sat back to watch the realization dawn on her face.

"I do NOT have big teeth," she said testily.

Doesn't she? Seems like I remember her having big teeth. I suppose I just haven't really taken notice lately! He thought for a moment before quickly glancing at her mouth, which was closed. "Do you not?" he asked casually.

"No! Thanks to your ruddy little Draco I was hit with a curse that made them grow very long," she said bitterly. "You were quite an arse that day... er... cruel, I mean. I let Madam Pomfrey use magic to fix them. They've been normal since." She shook her head in annoyance. "Honestly! Do you still 'see no difference,' Professor, after all this time?"

He couldn't say that he had, and he had no idea what she was working herself up so much about. "I have no idea, Professor Granger, what you are on about, and I certainly do *not* appreciate the tone you are taking with me. I've nothing to do with any childhood hexes you might have received." Good Lord. One would think that he'd hexed her himself according to her glare. And just why had she called him an arse? Before he could ask, she returned to her reading.

Sitting on a lone bench, she looked around at the sleepy, silent city, enjoying the flutter of the birds as they perched on the sparse trees and basked in the loving sun like children receiving adoring strokes on their heads from their mothers. It always was nice to walk through a place she'd frequented often in her years before getting her Hogwarts letter. Somehow it made her feel at peace with herself and comforted her. What could she do now that Ron and she had ended things?

"I just have to say that I would never sit about the streets of London on a bench to think," Hermione put in. "I'd find some other place for that. There's just too much going on. This writer is implying that it's a quiet little place. Ha! There is always something going on: double deckers whirling by, black cabs nearly running you down if you stray into the street, people milling around in every direction." She harrumphed. "Why did they not have me go to a nice spot in Hyde Park or..." Her voice trailed away. "Why are you looking at me like that?"

"You are over examining this," he said cautiously. "I've been to London before, thanks, so I don't see where any of this is relevant. Can we not skim forward?"

"Fine," she said in annoyance. "But look," she pointed to the paper, "this Mya...and I refuse to call myself that...is trading in her Galleons for Euros so that she can buy some sexy Muggle knickers."

He simply stared at her. Really, he couldn't care less what this author had her doing. He wanted to get on with the reading so that he could see what happened to him in the story.

"Why would I be getting Euros? Pence and pounds, thanks," she said heatedly.

As he sifted through the next few pages, she continued to grumble about never finding a completely silent place in London's streets to sit peacefully and take in the beauty of nature.

"Oh, here we are," he said blandly, "an owl has suddenly appeared with tidings from our 'ubiquitous' headmaster. Someone has been using their thesaurus."

"You've skipped too many pages!" she said indignantly, looking back over what he'd passed by. "Oh," she said suddenly, cheeks splotching a becoming pink color. "I

suppose you're right. You don't need to witness me buying my knickers and er... other things. What the bloody hell...?"

"What is it?" he asked in alarm.

"It says I've just bought lacy, green knickers with silver snakes that magically flit around making hissing noises." She started laughing loudly.

He couldn't help but to join her as the image proved quite humorous. Who would create such an atrocious thing? Surely they were intended as gag gifts, nothing sexy.

"Silver and Green? Snakes? I'd say that dear *Mya* is going to be showing off her underclothes to a Slytherin!" she said through laughter. Her mirth faded, as did his.

He had the sudden urge to skip forward even more to see just which Slytherin would witness those knickers. The author wouldn't dare pair them together. Anyone who even thought that he would so much as touch her were... Suddenly, unbidden, an image of Granger sprawled out on his bed came to mind. He slowly stalked towards his fantasy woman and reached down to pull away the scant fabric of her knickers when a resounding set of hisses permeated the silence of his dungeons. The snakes on the knickers were hissing their displeasure and daring him to touch any part of the fabric.

"Maybe, ah, maybe Draco is at Hogwarts," he offered, shaking away the scene in his head.

"But that would mean that I would have had relations with Draco *and* his father?" she asked incredulously. "I don't... I don't know who wrote this, but it is apparent that they don't think too highly of me or of what my morals might be, like I'm some trollop."

"I agree," he said absently, the half-naked Granger had returned to his mind, hissing snakes and all.

"Oh, gee, thanks, Professor. Always know how to make me feel better, eh?" she asked in annoyance. "Forget it." She held up her hand to stave off his question.

Had he said something wrong?

Mya smiled happily. "Oh, the headmaster always knows when to help someone and has perfect timing. I'll be he can see me even now, knowing that I'm smiling." She grinned and waved at the air, feeling silly, but knowing that her old headmaster's eyes were twinkling with merriment. She was going to Hogwarts. It had always been like a second home to her...well, since the night she was saved from the horrid, frightening, big, scary, dumb, big, horrid troll on Halloween night in the girls' toilet her first year. Before that, nobody liked her, not even Harold and Ronald.

Severus couldn't help but to laugh. Harold Potter? He realized that Hermione was also snickering.

"What an idiot," she commented. "How could they not tell that they used the same descriptions more than once?"

"About that troll that night," he ventured. "You didn't really go off to find it yourself, did you?"

She shook her head, knowing there was no use lying about it after all those years. "Ron and the others had been talking about me...rather rudely. I overheard them and spent the evening crying in private." She shook her head. "The thing just happened to venture in, and they came to save me."

"Ever the idiotic heroes," he said snidely.

"I could have died," she said in their defense.

Not saying anything, he looked back to the parchment.

After Hermione packed all of her things into five large trunks...hey, a girl has to bring all of her books and stuff, right?...she sat down to think about how it would be at Hogwarts. There would be no Ron there and no Harry there. How could she face being there all alone? Then she began to think of the one man who'd always been so horribly mean, cruel, and unkind to her, taking points away from her House for nothing. Why, Professor Snape had even taken points from her for breathing too loudly once, the prick!

"I only took points that were merited," he said defensively.

Mouth agape, Hermione shook her head in disbelief, ignoring him and making him want to point out that she and her rule-breaking, pesky friends had deserved every point he'd taken from them. They'd gotten away with far too many things that had resulted in no points lost. He had to catch up to be fair in some other way.

"I wonder if he still looks the same," Hermione said, sighing sadly. She pulled a photo that she'd clipped from a paper when he'd received one of his awards for a potion he'd invented. His long, ebony hair fell about his face in silky, greasy curtains, hiding one eye and framing his paleness, making his striking black eyes all the more prominent. He sneered impatiently instead of thanking the man giving him the award, nearly growling at the poor bloke, showing him pointy, sharp, crooked, yellowish teeth. That aquiline nose had never looked better and stood out proudly, suiting his marble-like skin perfectly.

Hermione sighed and felt the familiar tingle in her stomach. She'd worked with him on a project in her seventh year and had fallen in love with him. The headmaster had twinkled happily for her, throwing them together in all situations possible to make them notice each other, eagerly hoping to allow a relationship bud between them, but alas, nothing ever came of her feelings. Snape had taken her heart, stepped on it a few times, hexed it, diced it like a potions ingredient, smirked at it, and handed it back to her.

Well, he didn't know that he'd done that to her, but he'd done it all the same. See, what happened was, she was walking into town to buy a gift for his birthday when she saw him leaving the Three Broomsticks with Madam Rosmerta! They were quite cozy, and from the position of his hand...it was on her arse...she could tell that they were more than friends. It was then that she'd decided to give up on him and date Ron. However, she'd always kept his picture tucked away inside her bra beneath her left breast so that it was near her heart. She'd never gone a day without it...even back in Middle Earth when she'd been Legolas' secret lover.

As he finished reading the paragraph, he sat back in shocked silence. *How the fuck did this person find out about Rosmerta? It was only the one time! Well, no, it happened twice, but that was in the same night. How dare he or she write about it so blatantly!* he thought. He was afraid of what they would read next. It was obvious now where the story was headed. They were definitely trying to give some background information to the next pairing: he and Granger!

When he noticed that she too had sat back in a hesitant silence, he cleared his voice, saying, "The, ah, headmaster would never condone relations with a student. This author is clearly digging deep into the pitch to come up with something they find entertaining."

She nodded. "Right... and I would never carry your...anyone's...picture in my bra for years on end. This is utter rubbish."

"That description of me," he ventured, trying to think of how he could question its validity. Is that how people truly saw him? Horrid teeth? He'd already read a part where they'd made fun of his hair. Did people think that he didn't practice good hygiene?

"Your hair does fall over your face and hide your eye at times...not that I've been looking, mind," she said quickly.

"And it is quite oily at times," he offered. "It's always been that way."

"Right, and although my parents are dentists, they wouldn't make your teeth sound so... er... bad."

"Well, are they?"

"Oh," she said, loss for words apparent. "I... No, sir."

Exactly. And what pointy teeth anyway? They weren't pointed... not really! So what if his bottom front teeth overlapped a little? This person made him out to be some sort of cigarette-smoking, coffee-drinking vampire. *They aren't white, I know, but I'd like to think of them as off white...not bloody yellow.*

"This is really awkward," she said, smiling apologetically. "If you want to stop reading, I can go through it myself privately and give you all the pages that mention you."

Aha! Possible trickery. "I don't think so, Miss Granger." He doubted that she would do anything other than that, but he would not take the chance that one of her friends would visit, and they'd spend some time laughing at the tale before she'd get around to giving him the pages pertinent to him to destroy.

"All right then," she said disappointedly. "I just thought it would be easier for us that way. I don't know that I could read something too... er..."

"We'll just skim by those parts if there are any," he said reassuringly. "Besides, it seems that my character is involved with Rosmerta." He hoped she hadn't heard that guilty waver in his voice. Blasted wine! He reached for his tea...now cold...and took a big gulp. The room felt suddenly stuffy. He rose from the couch. "I believe I shall make use of the loo."

"Okay," she said, slouching down a little, snuggling into the pillow on her left.

After he relieved himself and washed his hands, Severus splashed some water over his face and looked into the mirror, barring his teeth to get a closer look at them. Shrugging, he made his way back to the couch to find that Granger had fallen asleep. He thought of taking the book and reading on without her, but he found that he was extremely tired also. He went to the door and tried to get it to open, but it wouldn't budge or respond to any spell he tried to cast at it.

He went back to the couch and sat down as far away from her as he could, propping his pillow behind him comfortably. She'd pulled the blanket up over her, causing him to take notice of the chill that was in the air. He pulled his corner up and covered his arms, leaving his legs uncovered and stretching out before them.

Wondering who had created the room and why it insisted on keeping them there, he watched the young professor sleep for a few minutes before drifting off into sleep himself.

Unbeknownst to either of them, the couch shifted and transfigured into a bed, leaving them to lie on their sides next to each other. Their pillows magically modified in size and positions to cradle their heads, and the blanket expanded and moved of its own accord to wrap itself about them.

Southern's Notes: A good bit of the things I have left on my list deals with bedroom stuff. Teehee. I suppose I'll have to have some sort of sex scene soon. That's going to be great fun. Each chapter has been enjoyable so far (especially coming up with the funky story bits). I'm making fun of things lightly and as per the request of others. Hell, I've used some of these plot devices before, but it's fun to see it giggled at. If you have any requests, let me know.

The Young and the Snarky

Chapter 4 of 8

Severus and Hermione wake to find themselves in an interesting situation. How will they deal with it and the latest twist in the story?

Disclaimer: I'm borrowing some of J.K. Rowling's characters and having a bit of fun... for free. I'll Portkey them home shortly.

I'd like to thank my beta, Charmed Nay, for taking the time to go through this even though she's off on a business trip. Cheers to you, my doll.

Severus stretched, willing his sleepy state to leave his body. When he tried to move his left arm, he realized that something heavy was pinning him down. He cracked open an eye. *What the bloody hell?* His first thought was that some shaggy creature of Hagrid's had made its way into his rooms and nestled against him, but then it all came back to him: the room, the story, the couch, and Hermione Granger.

The blasted couch was now a bed, and at some point during the night, she'd moved to lie against him, her head using his arm as a pillow. His eyes widened. The arm she was resting on curved back towards her body, and his palm was resting against the swell of her breast. *Fuck!* he yelled internally. In an instant of male insanity, he thought about closing his hand to lightly squeeze the plump softness, but he knew he should not do so and fought the urge.

His horror increased when she started moving. Obviously still sleeping, she wiggled her arse against his bare thighs *Hang the hell on! Why is my thigh bare?* He looked down and realized that his clothes had been changed from his daywear to his nightwear. He normally wore a nightshirt and underpants. A glance down showed him that his familiar dark grey shirt had ridden up some, leaving his thigh bare. Arching an eyebrow, he noted that she too had been changed into her nightclothes. However, he had never imagined her to wear sexy nightwear before. In fact, he'd never given anything she wore a second thought. Seeing the curve of one plump cheek, clad in a silky scarlet fabric, made his semi-aroused prick twitch.

Good Lord! Get a hold of yourself! This is Professor Granger, he thought, hoping to deflate his erection. Even as he thought this, he noted that her spaghetti-strap top was made to match the knickers. He supposed that if he'd had to imagine her wearing anything to bed it would have been a long, woolly nightgown like his mother used to wear. They were much alike, his mother and Hermione.

Feeling the need to get away from her, he roughly pulled his arm from beneath her as he peeled his body away. He was standing at the side of the bed by the time she'd sat up and looked around sleepily. A smug smile tugged at his lips when her eyes widened.

"Bloody hell! You're wearing a dress!"

His smile faded, and he looked down at this nightshirt. "What are you on about? This is a nightshirt!"

She rubbed her eyes and grinned sheepishly. "Sorry. I was thinking..." Her voice trailed away as she looked down.

His eyes followed hers to the line of her cleavage. "Yes?" he asked, enjoying her discomfort.

She pulled the blanket up over her and moved back against the pillows again. "The room's magic changed our clothes! And the couch!"

"Astute observation, Professor Granger," he said blandly, making his way to the table, which held coffee, toast, and eggs. "It's not wonder your students are topnotch."

"How can you be so calm?" she asked in annoyance. "We've just slept together!"

"Yes, slept... I do believe *that* is the key word." He added sugar to his coffee and stirred it as he opened the paper. Hoping he sounded indifferent, he added, "You've nothing to fear, Professor. Your skimpy sleepwear doesn't appeal to me."

"I'll have you know that I don't normally wear this to sleep," she said, bravely yanking away the covers and rising.

He looked over and saw that her cheeks were a bit flushed. However, the shirt was just long enough to cover her knickers, falling just above mid thigh. He had to admit that she looked good, tousled hair adding to the appeal, for she looked as if she'd been utterly bedded.

"The toast will get cold," he said. "No need to stand there."

She looked around for a moment. "Of course there would be no robe!"

"Of course..."

Once she was seated across from him and had begun to add jam to her toast, she asked, "Do you get the feeling that someone is doing all this on purpose?"

"I do."

"I'm going to hex his or her arse so hard, they'll feel it for weeks," she said darkly.

Both of his eyebrows rose at this. "My, I don't think I've ever heard you speak as colorfully as you have this morning."

"Yeah, well, you've never been forced to spend the night with me either," she replied before nibbling on her toast. "Mmmm. Good jam."

After a few minutes of silence, Severus said, "Ha! Look at this idiot." He passed the paper over to her, pointing at the picture of Fudge, who was ranting drunkenly at Scrimgeour.

"Good grief."

"Indeed."

He rose from the table. "If you will excuse me, I think I'll use the bath first."

"Sure," she said absently, settling back to read the paper.

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Nearly two hours later saw them refreshed, dressed properly, and sitting back on the couch, which had switched back from a bed the moment they'd finished eating.

"Now, where were we?" Hermione asked, scrolling through pages of the parchment. "Ah. Here."

*Hermione smiled as she walked up to the castle. She could see the lake and noticed through some strategically placed shrubbery that Hagrid was out in the water. Deciding to pay him a quick visit before meeting with the headmaster, she ventured that way.*

*The words she heard stopped her in her tracks. Luckily, Hagrid was facing away from her and hadn't noticed her approach.*

*"Yer doin' it right, ye know," he was saying, grunting between words. "Much better 'an las' time, this is."*

*To her horror...nearly causing her to faint...she realized that a tentacle, likely belonging to the giant squid, was wrapped around Hagrid's waist, its tip snaking up to caress one of his exposed, hairy nipples. As he splashed about, she realized that he hadn't any pants on and that another tentacle was below and...*

"Fucking hell," Severus said aloud, face white with shock.

"Where... where do they get these ideas?" Hermione added, ducking her head. "Hagrid would never..." Her voice trailed away. Would he?

"I believe that we should pass through this bit of voyeurism that you are pulling if you don't mind. I don't want to think about sex or Hagrid, much less the two of them together," he said, crossing his arms over his chest.

"Well, it's not as if I'm interested in reading it either!" She shuddered. "Ugh. Squid sex."

"Hell, Hagrid sex is bad enough," he said.

Despite the situation, they both started snickering.

"Okay, I've finally left and have entered Hogwarts."

*The castle seemed so lonely with all the students gone. Each step that she took echoed sorrowfully, joining the sadness that seemed to be lurking within the walls. A light breeze passed through the corridor, causing her spine to tingle. Someone was watching her. She looked around and couldn't see anyone. The entire time she walked about, making her way to the headmaster's office, she could feel someone else's presence. As she stopped by the gargoyle, she heard a slight shuffle. Spinning around with her wand drawn, she saw that it was only Mrs. Norris.*

*"Great," she mumbled. Filch would be along shortly. When the cat kept looking at her, she said, "I'll send for Crookshanks to keep you company if you stop following me." The cat nodded in understanding and left. "Whew."*

*The great dilemma before her was thinking about the headmaster's password. What was it? He'd not named it in the letter.*

*"Chocolate?" she tried. Nothing happened. "Jelly beans? Nerds? Wax lips? Snickers? Whatchamacallit? Lemon heads? Sugar babies? Sugar Daddy?" At this last one, she knew she'd finally guessed the password and quickly moved to step onto the stairs and move up to his door, which creaked open eerily.*

*"Miss Granger!" Dumbledore greeted merrily, eyes twinkling. "How lovely to see you! I am quite pleased you've accepted my request." He flashed a brilliant smile, teeth twinkling.*

*"Thank you for having me." She hugged the twinkling man who was much like an old grandfather to her and always had been, though they never spoke much while she was at school.*

He twinkled happily. "Here are your papers and what you'll need. I'm afraid that the only quarters available are those next to Professor Snape's down in the dungeons. I hope you don't mind."

"Oh, not at all," she said, heart banging crazily against her chest. Thumpty-thump-thump was its beat. 'Snape... my long lost first love,' she thought sadly.

"As large as the castle is, they only had an available room next to mine?" Severus asked acidly. "Clearly this person couldn't think of a better way to get our characters closer together."

"I agree. It's a bit silly to think that Hogwarts has only one room."

"And what's with all that twinkling that Dumbledore is doing? It's as if someone has spilt star dust on him," he said snidely.

"I'll just go down and put my things away, sir," she said.

"Oh, please!" Dumbledore said, twinkle in his eyes, "We're colleagues. Call me Albus, Hermione."

"Oh, cool. Thanks, Albus. See you at dinner."

She made her way down to the dungeons without incident and found herself standing outside of Snape's doorway. As if on queue, the door opened, and Snape stepped out.

"I suppose you need me to show you to your quarters," he said, smirking at her. "The headmaster has just sent me a message saying you'd be along this way."

"Yes, Professor."

He strode about fifteen feet to his left and pointed to an armored knight. "Behind this knight is a tapestry. You give him the password, and he'll move aside. After that, you give the password to the tapestry. It will pull itself up towards the ceiling to reveal a doorway. You will then give the doorway your password. After that, the door will open, and you can enter your chambers."

"What's the password?" she asked cautiously.

He smirked. "Slytherin rocks Dumbledore's socks." Though it was obviously meant to be humorous, his face was expressionless.

She smiled and bit her lip. "Thank you, Professor Snape."

Clearing his throat and smirking, he said, "You may call me Severus when we are alone." His little smirk widened into a bigger smirk as her mouth gaped open and moved like a goldfish would if it were out of water. "No comment?"

"I... please... Call me Hermione."

"Hermione," he said, testing her given name with his seductively silky voice.

"Yes, Severus?" she asked breathlessly.

"I will take my leave," he said, still smirking as he backed away towards his doorway.

Hermione was laughing loudly.

"What, pray tell, is so funny?" Severus asked.

"Do you even have to ask?"

Before he could answer, she erupted in new peals of laughter. "It wasn't that funny! Colleagues often call each other by name in private. I don't see the..."

"You... you're smirking again! Ahahahaha!"

"Hermione! That's enough," he admonished.

"Dumble... dore..." she said through giggles, "rocks your socks!"

"No," he said shortly. "Slytherin rocks his socks. Not the other way around." Once voiced aloud, he realized exactly how ridiculous it all was and joined her, chuckling lightly.

"I'm sorry, Severus, but it was just priceless. If you could have seen the expression on your face as you were reading." She smiled brightly. "I thought you might hex the parchment, and then I realized that they were right. You do smirk a lot."

"They should put something in here about your incessant laughter," he said in feigned indignation. "Shall we?"

She nodded.

Severus couldn't believe that she'd returned to the castle. Furthermore, he couldn't believe that his blasted friend and headmaster, Albus Dumbledore, had placed her next to him. What was the man trying to do to him? This would be torture. Of all people, Albus knew how hard it had been to get over Hermione after she'd helped him all that time as an apprentice of sorts during her seventh year.

He'd been certain that she'd felt something for him, and one evening, the Weasley twins, Bill Weasley, and Fleur Delacour had come to Hogwarts at the headmaster's invitation to help chaperone a ball in the Great Hall. After an hour of nothing happening, everything had changed.

She'd come to him and whispered in his ear, asking him to take her for a walk out on the grounds in the garden maze. Of course he'd accepted, discreetly pulling her away from the hall.

Once they'd wandered away far enough in the maze, he'd put up some wards so that nobody could hear or see them...giving them complete privacy to consummate their feelings with only the bright moonlight, twinkling stars, and the light breeze as their witnesses.

FLASHBACK!!!

"Oh, Professor, I've wanted this for so long. I am in love with you. Please... make love to me. I promise that I'll..."

Hermione placed her hand over the parchment. "Er... maybe we should wait before reading this."

"Well, I see no reason to do so," he said thickly. "We're adults and can handle this."

"M-maybe skipping forward wouldn't be so bad," she said hopefully.

"I would rather like to see what this person has to say about me," he said, actually wanting to read the section. It wasn't like reading about Lucius or Hagrid. This was different.

*"I promise that I'll never leave you." Her voice was nearly breathless with anticipation as her fingers began to work on the first of his hundred buttons on his frock coat.*

*"I swear that I never thought I could find again what I've found with you. I didn't believe that I was worthy of your love, Hermione. I thought that I was too old, too horrible, and had done too many crimes in my past to ever deserve someone as pure as you. You're as pure as a snowy little dove flying about in the misty, sacred clouds that hover over holy grounds. And to think that you love me..." His eyes misted over.*

"What rubbish!" Severus roared. "The day that I get teary-eyed over getting a piece of... over something like this, hell will have frozen over. I've never been what one would call sentimental. Nor would I..."

"Shh!" Hermione said, trying to ignore him and looking back to the parchment.

If he didn't know better, he'd say that she was enjoying that tripe!

*"I've had enough of these buttons, my love," Hermione said eagerly, brandishing her wand. She yelled out, "Closegetoffofus!" All of their clothes...except her knickers...quickly left their bodies, leaving them to bare their fruits to the other.*

*"Goddess," he said quietly. He felt the lurch of anticipation in his thick, throbbing pole of man meat and knew he wouldn't last long if this carried on. He sat on the ground at her feet and began pulling her sopping knickers down slowly, enjoying their great drenching wetness, as he knew that it meant she was hot and ready for him.*

"Disgusting!" Hermione said. "My knickers would never be drenched or sopping. It sounds unclean!" She put her hands over her face. "Did I just say that out loud?"

Snape knew this wouldn't be the time to tease her. In fact, he wanted to learn more about this encounter. "Sorry," he said, lying, "I was distracted and heard nothing. What was that?" He was happy that she chose not to look at him, simply waving him off, because he wouldn't have been able to keep his face straight otherwise.

*After passing his long, large, bulky, hooked nose over the knickers a few times, he pulled Hermione down to him and kissed her fervently, flipping them over so that he could be on top.*

*"It's so frighteningly big, Severus. However will that fit in me?"*

*Pouncing on her lips again, he ignored her question. He broke the kiss and asked, "May I touch between your posterior vulva junction and your anus?" Without waiting for a reply, his hand slid down to pinch at her perineum, hoping she didn't mind his odd fetish, but he certainly enjoyed when a woman placed her fingernails there on him.*

*She cried out in sudden orgasm. Feeling smug, he positioned the glistening head of his ready member at the opening of her canal and looked at her in askance. She nodded to him, and he buried his sword to the hilt, stabbing her deeply and swiftly. However, he hadn't planned on the tightness that he met halfway in... in the form of a hymen, nor the blood that his stab had conjured.*

"You're a virgin!" he said in shock.

"Yes, is that all right?" she asked, afraid he'd not want her.

"Oh, yes! I am your first. I'll be your last!" He began moaning and grunting as he pumped speedily into her like a jackhammer set on high, vibrating her body with the hum of his repeated manly thrusts into her slick folds.

"It feels so great. I can feel you hitting my cervix!" she cried out. "Even my uterus!"

"Wow, you're velvet walls are so tight."

"Yes."

"Yes."

"Oh, I'm coming."

"Right. Me too."

*Together they found heaven and waved at the small angels who were smiling at them knowingly. Neither had been prepared for the bliss awaiting them.*

"I..." Hermione shrugged, not knowing what to say.

"On the school grounds," he agreed, shaking his head in mock horror. As a student, he'd made use of the gardens once, but she need not know about it.

"Jackhammer?" A grin spread on her lips.

"Manly thrusts and all that," he said, hoping to soothe their embarrassment.

It worked, as they both began snickering again. After a while, Hermione said, "My face hurts." She stretched. "You know, what I've been wondering is how could this Hermione not know that she'd been with Snape before? She said she'd seen him with Rosmerta and that he'd never known he'd hurt her. Uh, wouldn't she have mentioned this?"

"I was also wondering about that."

*Hermione stood shakily and grimaced as she realized that their combined juices were running down her legs as if racing.*

"Ugh," Hermione commented.

Severus had to agree, wrinkling his nose in distaste.

"Allow me," Snape said, picking up his wand to clean away the evidence from their bodies. After they were dressed, he held her close. "I'll be right back. I'm going to go and get us some punch, make a walk through the students to be certain nobody has noticed our disappearance, and then I'll be back."

"All right," she agreed.

*Snape did as he said, and when he made his way back to Hermione, she was not alone. It appeared that Fleur Delacour had been out for a walk and happened upon her. His heart shattered into a million, tiny pieces. Fleur was kissing her and playing with her breasts. In return, Hermione was doing the same. Both girls were bare to the waist.*

*'How could she do this to me?' he wondered. 'I love her so much, and not five minutes after we made love for the first time, she's snogging with another woman. I would have had children with her!'*

*Severus quickly hid when he heard male voices.*

*"Perfect!" one Weasley twin said. "Look!"*

*"Lovely," said the other. "Bill shouldn't mind if we have a bit of a watch."*

*"Especially if he doesn't know about it."*

*"Right," agreed the second twin. "I say, that lust punch was perfect for tonight. Did you see how everyone paired off and disappeared, coming back to pair off again? Brilliant! And this show is much better than the Crabbe, Goyle, and Bullstrode sandwich back the other way."*

*"Shhh."*

*"Oh, 'ermione! You 'ave zee purrfect breasts."*

*Severus was angry. He stepped out of his hiding spot and cast a Stupefying hex on both of them. He did the same to Fleur, causing her to fall away from Hermione's grasp.*

*Yelping and covering her breasts, she said, "Severus, I don't know what came over me."*

*"It was never me you wanted. It was the punch," he said sadly.*

*"No, really. I want you. I love you."*

*He nodded down to Fleur's partially naked body. "It's a lust potion, Hermione." He lifted his wand and pointed it at her.*

*"Severus, please..."*

*"Oblivate!" he said. Before she could get her bearings, he slipped away, not wanting her to see him. Instead of going back to the hall, he made his way back down to his dungeons to drown his sorrows. For he hadn't had any punch. He truly loved her.*

*"Oh, how sad," Hermione said. She turned to face him. "I'm so sorry."*

*"What?" he asked incredulously. "It's not like you did it. It's some rubbish story. You don't think that I would... take part in something such as this, do you?"*

*Her cheeks reddened. "Well, no, I don't, but it makes me sad to think that someone would have you feeling so lonely and so mistreated." She shrugged. "And obviously, Hermione loves you. She might not have had the punch either. You should have given her a chance to explain."*

*"Well, what was she doing with Delacour?" he asked testily. When she didn't answer, he nodded smugly. "See? She did have some. He did what any man in his right mind..."*

*"Aha! So you would just Oblivate me rather than talk to me as an adult?" she asked heatedly. "If ANYONE mucked with my mind in such a way, it would be unforgivable."*

*He glared at her. "What I meant to say, is that he thought rationally and realized that she didn't want him...not in the same sense that he wanted her. Why, it's no wonder he turned to Bess."*

*"Bess?"*

*"Rosmerta."*

*"So... know her personally, do you?"*

*"Excuse me," he said, slightly offended. "I have been teaching at this school for many years. Before that, I was a student here. I believe that knowing someone's name who lives nearby has nothing to do... It's certainly none of your business anyway."*

*"I am sorry. You are right," she agreed. "Truly."*

*He nodded, surprised she'd realized that she'd crossed a line. While they were reading personal things with characters named for them, it didn't give her the right to think she could question anything he truly did. To him, it seemed as if she was taking the story quite seriously. Perhaps he should point out that it's only blasted fanfiction. *Hmph. What an odd choice of words. Of course someone must be a fan of us for our parts in Voldemort's demise, and since this is fiction, the term fanfiction is appropriate.**

*"Tea?" he asked instead.*

*"Yes, I could use a break from this. My back hurts a little."*

*He nearly offered to rub it for her, but he realized what an error that would be...and how highly inappropriate that would be, considering what they'd just read. She'd likely think he was trying to come on to her.*

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**Southern's Notes:** Teehee. I'm not done yet! I know, you're saying that I should get on with it. Everyone is leaving such great requests and suggestions that I can't help incorporating some of it. Muahaha!

Severus and Hermione enjoy conversation and learn new things about each other. The story they are reading gives a clue as to who may have written it. Or does it?

**Disclaimer:** I've borrowed some of J.K. Rowling's characters for a bit of fun only.

**I'd like to say thanks to my lovely beta, Charmed\_Nay, for going through this for me...as always! CocoaChristy deserves some recognition as well. She always listens to my moaning and ponderings about the plot, helping me and encouraging me when I need it.**

---

Severus found himself confiding, "I wonder if the writer of this story knows that I truly did see Bess. It's the only thing that I can think of." He watched her face to gauge her feelings on the matter as he sipped his tea.

"I'd say it's more of a lucky guess. As you said earlier, they added that bit about Narcissa Malfoy and you, and it's not true. I'd say they are just tossing people in," she huffed. "To think that they'd put me with Fleur or... the others!"

"Yes, well, I didn't request to be paired with you either," he reminded snidely. Part of his mind filed away that she didn't seem to mind that he had been with Bess. Perhaps he had mistakenly believed her to be like the others...nosy, wanting more details, or snide, looking down upon him for his choices.

"Why do you always think that I'm taking a poke at you? I was talking about Malfoy! And Legolas! And... oh, forget it." She rolled her eyes and sat back, bringing her nearly empty cup to her lips.

"But not talking about me?" He seriously doubted that.

"Not at all."

"Is that right?" he asked, voice politely incredulous, shaking his head.*Interesting.*

"As you know, I've come to respect you. I always have... most of the time."

"Indeed."

"Whatever you say, Professor! You're not going to get a rise out of me."

*Oh, but I will, my dear,* he thought. What? What the hell? This damn room is making me crazy. We have to get out of here... and soon. "Come. Let's read more of that rubbish. Perhaps then we will be able to leave this ruddy room."

"All right."

He scooted closer to her. "*Accio parchment.*"

*Yes, having her so near again was bringing back all those old feelings. He was uncertain if he could deal with that. The way she'd looked at him. Could it be possible? "No," he muttered aloud. He could not take another broken heart, especially by the same girl.*

*He wished that the bushy-haired-insufferable-know-it-all-witch had never spread her legs for him. Silky, milky thighs... He'd been biding his time, but he would seek vengeance on the twins for that lust potion. When he'd have a plan in place, something would happen and keep them from his wrath. It hit him all at once. He could bring his own lust potion to their wedding. The Weasley twins were marrying the Patil twins, as both witches were pregnant with twins themselves.*

*"Yes, that's what I'll do. We'll see how they like their new wives rutting about with guests." He nodded evilly as he made his plans. What were their names again? Right, Pavratty and Padme, they would definitely be mingling and acting out with the lust potion, for they'd done the same things whilst students. He'd happened upon them and dates many times in the corridors late at night.*

"Pavratty? Padme?" Hermione said, giggling. "Oh, that's rich. The author could have at least spelled their names right!" She shook her head. "And having twins marry twins and then birthing twins... yuck. What confusion! I suppose they think it's clever."

"Pavratty suits her," Severus said with a nod. "She snuck about the castle at times like a little mouse just like this person is saying. However, all of her quietness didn't keep her from being found by this sly snake. I actually did happen upon her more than once." He smirked. "Gryffindor lost many House points because of her little trysts."

"What? With whom?"

"Different people," he said, shrugging nonchalantly. "And what's wrong with Padme's name? She was always quiet enough, never losing Ravenclaw points."

Hermione started laughing loudly. "They might as well add on the name Amidala behind it." At Severus' blank stare, she nudged him with her finger playfully. "Star Wars? Darth Vader's wife? Don't tell me you haven't ever read one of George Lucas's books! He's famous in both the Wizarding and Muggle worlds."

He realized at that moment that the girl's name was Padma, not Padme, and he felt ridiculous. "Simple mistake," he said. "It's not like I've read any of those books."

"Or seen the movies," she added.

"Indeed." He nodded to the parchments, hoping she'd stop smiling at him as if she knew something about him that he didn't want her to know. So maybe he had read some of the books. *Only the earlier ones!* his mind justified. *Emperor Palpatine is a very interesting character. I still hold out hope that one day his clone will return and rule the galaxy. That little Potter brat... er... Luke brat was a right pest. If they'd have let the Empire rule, there would have been peace in the galaxy.* He'd made the mistake of mentioning this to Filius once in discussion. The little bugger had accused him of thinking like a Death Eater and had even made a parallel of Death Eaters and storm troopers, Voldemort and Palpatine, and of course, Potter and young Skywalker.

Annoyed that his expression was obviously giving him away to Hermione, he pointed to the parchment again.

*A knock on the door brought Severus out of his fantasies of revenge. He quickly answered the door and found the object of his old desires standing there: Hermione. She was like a beacon in the night, a bright star guiding wise men, a diamond in the rough, a white splotch on a black background, and many things that stood out boldly that he couldn't think of at the moment.*

"Can I help you?" he asked silkily, enjoying the red color that coloured her cheeks.

"Did you see that?" Hermione asked. "Color and colour in the same sentence!"

Severus glared at her and made no comment. If anything, he would have pointed out the absurd descriptions the author used for her. However, it was best he not point that out, lest he find himself having to listen to her indignant whinging.

*Ebony eyes met cinnamon eyes and locked in silent battle. Who would win? Who would lose? Who would be awake, and who would snooze? He would not ask again even though she was biting her lip enticingly and seemed to have lost her courage. If she was a real woman, then she would voice what she wanted.*

*In the next instant, her honey-colored hair was tossed off of her shoulders, and her perfect cupid's bow lips were rising up to brush against his fleetingly in greeting. "I... I want... I want something from you..."*

"And what's that?" he asked, raising his eyebrow in question.

"Something sweet... I have a hunger and need this from you."

"Yes..." he murmured, feeling his body heat. "Say it." "Anything."

"Can I borrow a cup of sugar?" she asked hopefully, licking her lips.

*Severus frowned, stepped back from the doorway, and allowed her entrance. "I suppose," he grumbled, not bothering to hide his disappointment. She had purposely dressed in a satiny, silky, velvet, lacy sexy outfit and had used that sexy voice and gaze to make him think that she wanted something more... something sexual... something he could really sink his teeth into. Well, it's not like he couldn't sink his teeth in the sugar, mind, but something he wanted to sink his teeth into.*

*Slinking her way towards his couch, she sat down, legs open, shimmering skirt riding up and showing that she had no knickers on beneath. He could make out the thatch of soft, honey-colored...no, dark...hairs from his vantage point, yet he decided to move closer, hoping to catch a sniff of her scent with his super sensitive nose.*

Hermione shook her head. "Can we not skip over some of this? I don't like reading this, especially not with them having me dressed this way. And I DON'T slink!"

"There is nothing wrong with slinking," he pointed out, "if it's done the right way... by the right woman."

"Prat," she grumbled. "They've got me as having cinnamon eyes. They are brown, thanks, and honey-colored hair? It's brown, too. I wonder if this person even knows me? I mean, of course, I don't always wear knickers, but that's only..." Her voice trailed away, and her cheeks heated in humiliation. "Er..."

"It's only a story," he said, trying to not repeat in his mind what she'd just confided about her knickers.

"Yes, but how would you feel if they had your legs sprawled open and someone leering at your... genitals, trying to sit near you to smell you." She frowned. "I should be offended! Are they trying to say that I smell? Legs open, knickers or not, you certainly shouldn't be able to discern any scent, especially sitting so far away."

Severus wished for a bottle of Ogdens'. Why did he have to be stuck in a room with Hermione Granger, queen of incessant chattering? Better yet: Why couldn't she at least gripe about something he was interested in. He wanted to point out that some women, unfortunately...or fortunately, depending on the witch...do have a stronger scent that men can smell once disrobed. She shouldn't take it so personally.

"I'm being silly, I know, but you'd know how I feel if they'd be saying these things about you," she said softly. "It just makes me want to shower."

"You don't need a shower," he said, deciding to mock her. "I have an extra sensitive nose, as does the Snape in this story...obviously. I smell nothing that makes me think you need a washing."

"W-What?" Her eyes narrowed suspiciously as she gazed at his nose.

He enjoyed the way her mouth dropped open in shock. "Yes, some men can truly detect a woman's personal scent." He made a show of sniffing. "Why, do you spray jasmine or some other floral scent on yourself?"

Her mouth snapped shut, and her cheeks reddened as she moved away from him. "How could you know if it's not true?"

*Bloody hell,* he thought. *She must truly use that scent either in her soap, shampoo, or oils. Did I notice it subconsciously?* He reached a hand out to still her retreat. "Hermione, I was only joking. Really. I thought it would be funny to... taunt you, and I simply picked that scent out." He felt a bit smug about his good guess.

She smirked. "Yes, I know. I hate jasmine! I was also joking." She moved closer. "Shall we?"

*Why that little...* He ignored her and gazed at the parchment. He saw that the Snape in the story was pretending to drop things on the floor to bend down and get glimpses beneath her skirt. It was obvious to him that some schoolboy had something to do with this. He would never stoop to such theatrics. Even as he thought this, he wondered what he'd see if he dropped his teacup beneath the table and decided not to summon it to him, getting it on his own. Was this a day that she was sans knickers? He shook his head and tried to pay attention to the words on the parchment, but her words stopped him.

"What in the world?" She pointed out a sentence. "Look at these odd squiggly lines and this sudden bold print. It says, 'Author's Note inserted to say that I decided it was lemon time and wanted to put some in for everyone who has been begging for some. Hope you won't mind!' What do they mean by it being 'lemon time'?"

"Perhaps we're to have an intermission and drink a lemony beverage?" He sneered. "Why would a reader request this? Surely they can get up at any moment to seek a break."

"Or Dumbledore is going to force the characters to have some sherbet lemons! Normally I think of lemons and Dumbledore together, what with his obsession."

"Possibly," Snape agreed. "Oh... er... Well, I don't think that, ah, it was what they meant." He nodded to the parchment.

*Snape's eyes narrowed dangerously suddenly. "How dare you come to my chambers dressed provocatively and ask for sugar. The only thing sweet you'll be getting is about ten inches of my dick."*

"Oh, shite," Hermione said, bringing a hand to her mouth. Mortified, she added, "That's quite blunt."

"Well, at least they've measured it correctly."

She peered at him over her fingers, eyes wide with disbelief. "Really?"

He was about to ask her if she'd like to check for herself when he realized that they were dangerously close to flirting and getting completely too personal. It wouldn't do to let the room or the person responsible coerce them into anything. "I... That was uncalled for," he said lamely, ignoring the grin on her face.

*As if in a trance, Hermione stood, pushed down her skirt to reveal her nakedness beneath, and slinked towards Snape in what was supposed to be a sexy strut; however, she looked more like a pissed fellow stumbling away from a pub.*

*Snape stood and met her halfway, looking for the world like the pavement that beckons to pub goers, causing them to fall on their arses. This night, however, the only thing his little intoxicating witch would fall on was his big cock, and he wasn't talking about the rooster in his spare room that he kept as his faithful familiar either. No, he was*

*talking about the large erection bulging at the seam of his trousers; he was referring to the one that had visited her hen's nest once before.*

*Ripping her shirt away with his strong hands in one tug, he said, "Mr. Plonker wants some attention. Does little Miss Puss want to play with him? Hmmm?" He gyrated his hips a little, thrusting forward. "Plonkity, plonk, plonk. I wanna plonk you good, girl." He leered at her. "Talk to him. He responds to touch or sound."*

*"Meow," Hermione said before trying to purr like Crookshanks. She reached down and said, "Are you hear, Mr. Plonker?"*

Severus' laughter was too great to keep reading. Of all the outrageous things to name one's penis! This person who wrote the story was a complete idiot. In fact, it had to be a woman writer. Every wizard knows that a name such as "Plonker" would never do. Something more male and certainly more reflecting upon the man's character would do.

"This is just unreal. I do hope that he doesn't plan on making any money as a writer," Hermione added, hint of a smile on her face.

"Pardon, I thought you said 'he' just now."

"Yes, I did. It's obvious that this is a male writer."

"Indeed?"

"Well, men always think of things like this. Nobody's clothes rip off that way! Pub talk? Cocks? Mr. Plonker and Miss Puss? Yes, definitely a man," she said firmly.

"And here I was beginning to think of it as a woman," he said, gazing at her intently. "I figured no male would stoop to naming his, ah, more private bits something like that."

"Well, plonker does fit in a way, as does puss," she conceded. "What would you like it to be named?"

"I think that something along the lines of..." His eyes narrowed. "How dare you try to learn what I... How dare you!" His voice was a low hiss.

"What are you on about?" she asked, frowning her brow in confusion. "I didn't mean any harm by it." She sighed when he crossed his arms. "Good grief. Okay, just to prove that I wasn't trying to extract any information from you about your... er... genitals, I'll admit that I would never call my, ah, you know, Miss Puss."

He raised an eyebrow. "No?"

"Of course not."

"What do you call her then?"

"Well, I've never named it before." She blushed slightly. "But if I did, it wouldn't be something that sounds partially vulgar. Maybe Miss Kitty or something along those lines, but not Miss Puss."

Severus couldn't contain his laughter. He carried on even though she was glaring at him in anger and indignation. Finally his laughter faded, and he said, "Here, Kitty, Kitty."

"Oh, you... you wanker!" she said.

His laughter faded. "Now that was uncalled for, Hermione."

She turned away from him to face the wall. "Sorry."

He looked towards the door, pulled his wand, and tested the ward. "Still locked in. Hopefully, we can be out of here soon. I think it's driving us mad."

"You're the only one that's mental," she huffed.

"The Prince's sword," he blurted suddenly.

"Sorry?"

He looked down at his crotch pointedly. "The Prince's sword," he repeated. It was his turn to look away and feel the heat rise in his cheeks.

"Oh," she murmured. "Well, that's not so bad."

The moment he turned back to gauge her sincerity, she spoke again.

"Not too bad at all, Your Majesty." She broke into peals of laughter.

He simply sneered at her and returned to reading the parchment.

Hermione began reading and tsked. "Look at this. She's groping you and asking if you are 'hear.' Is she asking if it hears or if it's here? Either way, it's wrong! Maybe she means to ask 'do you hear' since he mentioned that it responds to sounds."

"That would make more sense," Severus agreed. "He's just been on about his bulging erection, so it shouldn't be hard to miss."

"True," Hermione said. "But this person has trouble with homonyms. Have you noticed? They've used crazy things: queue instead of cue, close instead of clothes, and now hear instead of here. I really don't like that."

"Nor I, but, unfortunately, that is quite common."

"You know," she said, realization alight on her face, "Ronald had problems with homonyms! I wonder if he's had something to do with this... Early on, it did seem like the author was flattering him."

"Weasley," Snape growled. "If *he's* behind this, I shall hex the red from his hair!"

"As will I," Hermione vowed.

Severus didn't doubt that she meant it either.

*Both were standing in his sitting room naked and touching each other, enjoying the hot, wet, sex-scented bodies of each other when suddenly Severus sniffed and quickly wiped away a tear.*

*"What is it, my love bunny?" Hermione asked.*



"Don't call me that," he said, wiping at another tear.

"Talk to me. What is it?"

"This is beautiful...you here with me, naked, in my chambers and wanting to make love to me." He sniffed loudly. "I've never made love to anyone before... really made love. Oh, I've raped, ravished, fucked, and had my share of affairs with friends' wives, but I want to lay you down on a bed of roses and make love to you so slowly that you'll wonder if I've forgotten about what I'm doing and beg me to carry on!"

"Oh, Severus, that's the nicest thing anyone has ever said to me." Hermione kissed him on the lips and hopped up, wrapping her legs around his waist and burying him inside of her in one perfect movement. "Take me to your bed."

Severus couldn't make it to the bed. He slammed her into the cold, stone wall instead, not bothering with a Cushioning Charm, as he could hex away her bruises and pain later, and began pumping into her as rapidly as a rabbit in a hurry.

"I. Thought. You. Were. Going. To. Make. Love. To. Me," Hermione said in moans between the sharp jabs of Mr. Plonker as he entered Miss Puss over and over again.

He stopped, realizing that she was right. Not letting himself slide out of her, keeping her body flush to his, he walked to the room, not missing any thrusts as he did so. Waving his hand at the bed, he called, "Rosebedikus."

About a hundred soft rose petals appeared atop his bed. He moved them to the bed quickly, allowing her to slide off of him as he put her down. "There is something I'd like to do to you first."

"What?" she asked, gasping as he moved to kneel between her thighs and sniffed a few times as if he were trying to inhale her scent and make it part of him.

"I'm going to give you a nose job!" He quickly moved down and rubbed his nose along the slit of her crevice, swiping out with his tongue as he did so. "You taste like honey, cinnamon, strawberry rainbows...delicious!"

Near the top was a big bundle of nerves just waiting to be teased. He nuzzled it with his big, crooked nose and smiled smugly as she moaned. As frantically as he could, he rubbed his nose against her, determined to give her the best nose job of her life! Within moments, she was crying out in climax.

"Nobody knows nose like you know nose..." she wailed loudly, reaching peak.

He quickly moved up and slid into her wet, hot, slick, fiery channel, thrusting into her and finding his release in two deep, fast, passionate strokes. "That's the best sex I've ever had," he moaned.

"Yes," she said breathlessly.

A pounding on the outer door of his chambers had them quickly parting and looking around crazily.

"We must get dressed," they said in unison.

Snape waved his hands, and their clothes and wands flew to them. As he took his wand, he pointed it to Hermione. "Cleansantikus."

She felt a sweep of magic cleanse her most intimate being. She decided to return the favor. "Cleansantikus."

"Thank you," he said warmly, blowing her a kiss, eyes twinkling like Dumbledore's. It was then she noticed that they weren't black and soulless at all...only a dark brown. "Let us go hence to yon chamber and see who dares to disturbeth our coupling and afterglow."

She followed him and sat down on the couch, picking up a Potions book, pretending to read.

"Hark, who goes there?" Snape asked.

A flowery, feminine voice answered, "It's me, Blaise Zabini. You invited me over for dinner tonight."

Paling, Severus turned to Hermione. How could he have forgotten that? She didn't appear too happy about it.

"Surely they don't mean Blaise Zabini? Feminine voice? He's got one of the deepest voices I've ever heard on someone my age... always has," Hermione said.

Severus was thoughtful for a moment. "Perhaps the author knows something that we don't know."

Hermione nodded. "Maybe." She pushed the parchment away. "I don't think it was Ron who wrote this."

"Oh?"

"Well, he's a bit thick about writing things for schoolwork or essays, but he's not like this. That's only because he doesn't actually take the time to try. He would at least use correct spells in writing this. I mean... what sort of spells are these? Rosebedikus?"

"Cleansantikus?" he added, enjoying her blush and even more, enjoying her boldness as she replied.

"Cleansantikus."

Someone's stomach growled suddenly. Both began laughing.

"Are you hungry?" he asked quietly.

"I am, but I think I'll need the loo first. We've been at this for a while now."

He nodded. "I'll wait until you're done."

"Thanks."

He watched as she made her way to the doorway and never took his eyes from the womanly sway of her hips. Since when had she started walking in such a fashion? When he realized where his thoughts were taking him, he found himself wondering why he was so bent on fighting an attraction to her. He supposed it wouldn't be so bad to get to know her better. She'd proven herself capable of handling his comments, and she didn't probe too deeply, hoping that he'd spill all of his secrets or trying to invade his privacy. Perhaps he would consider a friendship... or something else if they continued to get along well enough.

The table before him transformed into a larger table; freshly cooked food, new scented candles, and bright flowers appeared. A harp appeared and began playing a mildly

relaxing tune, setting a more romantic atmosphere.

"Interesting," he mumbled, wondering if the room had somehow tapped into his thoughts.

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**Southern's Notes:** Sorry that it's taken so long for an update. My mom had to let someone go at her restaurant, and she's needed my help everyday. Work sucks. Then, my beta had a busy week and couldn't get to it right away. I still have a few more funnies to get through before the story is over, but it won't be much longer than a couple of chapters. If you have anything you'd like to see here, please let me know. I'll definitely find room for it. Cheers!

## All My Children

### Chapter 6 of 8

Hermione and Severus take one step forward in their personal relationship, thanks to the parchment of course.

**Disclaimer:** I've swiped some of Rowling's characters for a bit of fun. I'll Floo them home later.

**Thanks go to Charmed\_Nay for taking the time to beta this for me.**

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Hermione immediately noticed that the atmosphere in the room had changed. A harp had appeared, which was playing a soft melody, a flowery scent filled the room, and the table had been set enticingly.

"Did you do this?" she asked tentatively, nodding to the table. She didn't want him to think she was hoping that he had.

"No, it seems," he looked around at the room, "that the room sees fit to turn this meal into something... ah... romantic."

"Oh... well then..." She couldn't put to words what she'd first thought. She wanted to say that they just go along with it, but the thought of admitting such a thing mortified her.

"I didn't suggest that we act on it," he said acridly, breaking into her thoughts.

"I know that, Severus," she said deftly with a hint of sarcasm, unable to look at him.

"You seem horrified at the thought." His voice was quiet, and his glare didn't seem as harsh as he strode forward to face her. He stopped before her and cocked his head to the side, giving her no option but to look at him. "Why, might I ask, are you gazing at me like that?" he finally asked.

"Look," she began, "I know you don't have anything to do with this room." She gestured towards the table. "I simply wanted to know if maybe you... you did it. I think it's lovely is all. And if you had... well..."

"Well, what?" he prodded.

"I don't know," she said honestly, stepping by him and going to take her seat at the table. She didn't turn back to see him enter the loo, but she heard the door close with a snap behind her.

Something in the pit of her stomach bothered her. She could feel it burning and knew exactly what it was. It was disappointment...despair even. Severus Snape would never change. He would never be the type of man to set a romantic scene such as the one before her. He would never be someone with whom she could converse with for hours on end. He would never be interested in her. Uncertain why she would want him to be in the first place, she pondered her line of thoughts and feelings. The time they'd spent reading through the rubbish story had shown her a different side to him.

She wished he were capable of being so much more than some dark, cranky, former professor. For certain he was a friend... now anyway. Would he object to taking private dinners with her after they were finally found or released from the room's spell? Why shouldn't they be allowed to carry on a friendship now that they'd endured being imprisoned together? Not having anyone close to her at the castle was wearing on her.

"May I?" came a silky voice.

She looked up to find Severus gesturing to the chair on her right. "Yes, of course," she said with a nod and a tight smile.

"What were you thinking of?"

"Nothing."

"You seemed lost in thought." He uncorked the wine bottle, bypassing the pitcher of juice. "Care for a glass?"

"Please." She decided to say some of what she'd been thinking. "After this is over, will we still be friends?"

"I was quite unaware that we *were* friends," he said easily, placing a glass in front of her while he began pouring his.

Hermione said nothing, slightly stung. She'd assumed very little, and yet, it was still too much. Blinking away the hurt, she sipped her wine and pointedly ignored him, turning her attention to the plate before her. "Mmmm, these jacket potatoes are delicious. They don't taste as if they've been prepared as normal." She chewed and then asked, "Do you think the elves make this food then?"

Severus nodded. "I'm certain. We're still in the castle." His blank expression changed into a slight sneer. "Are you assuming the room is cooking for us? Some dark magic is afoot maybe? Or perhaps it's ordering out for us..."

"Don't be snide," she retorted sharply. "What's gotten into your underpants anyway? Before I went to use the toilet, you were in a better mood. Right now, you're being a bloody prat."

He looked surprised for an instant. "I don't know what you mean."

Hermione ignored him, quelled her disappointment, and realized that it was better to know at that moment that he didn't even want to be her friend, much less dinner date. She should have known not to get her hopes up where he was concerned. She viciously attacked the food before her as if it were at fault for her stupidity.

"If I offended you..."

"You didn't," she interrupted.

"Yes, but you seem..."

She pierced a potato and glared at him. Noting that he seemed contrite, she looked away. "I just felt that we'd changed...our relationship...somehow. I suppose I saw us being friends after this. You know, talking sometimes, maybe having dinner." She went back to eating.

"That might not be difficult to arrange," he said, sounding as if each word was forced.

"If you have to force yourself to agree to be my friend, Severus, then it's not worth the trouble," Hermione said, moving her attention back to the rest of her meal. The rest of the meal was finished in silence, but she could feel his eyes upon her every now and then.

When she made no move to speak to him again after she'd finished eating and was simply sipping on her wine, he asked, "Do you want some time to yourself before we begin reading the story again?"

"I'm sick of the story," Hermione said. "You read it."

"Very well," he said curtly, rising, and moving over to the couch with the parchment to get comfortable.

She watched him while he read, sipping on her wine slowly. Many times she had to bite her lip to keep from laughing at his expression. He'd been outraged, annoyed, disgusted, and even amused all in the space of twenty minutes. Unable to stay away from the horrid tale any longer, she moved to sit next to him.

Saying nothing to her, he moved closer and flicked his wand so that the parchment maneuvered to where she could read it.

"Wait. Oh, my God! What's Sirius Black doing in here?" she asked, appalled. "Can't they let the man rest in peace?"

"It appears that Hermione was angry that Snape asked Zabini over for dinner." He held up a hand and nodded. "Zabini is a female in this story."

She giggled and allowed him to continue, enjoying his dry, sarcastic tone.

"Sirius Black walked out of the Veil and happened upon Hogwarts just in time to take Hermione on a date to make me jealous." His expression darkened. "For the record, mind, I would have never touched any woman that had gone anywhere near Black's bed."

"I can't believe they would put me with him!" she said indignantly. "I mean... I did like him when I first found out..."

"When you and Potter broke him out of that tower and enabled his escape you mean? Costing me an Order of Merlin?" he interrupted.

"That's unfair! You know that he was innocent. If we hadn't done that, he would have been killed for something he didn't do," Hermione said, hoping he'd see her point.

"Black, that bastard, was guilty of many things," he said, eyes glittering.

"I didn't like who he became. When we went to his house that summer before he died, he was hoping that Harry would be kicked out of Hogwarts, trying to force him to be like his father, and just a bad influence all together." She shook her head. "I felt so guilty when he died because I'd started really disliking him. I could even see Mrs. Weasley's dislike for him, and I just didn't want Harry to be taken in."

She stopped when she noticed the way he was gazing at her. It was almost as if he were appraising her for the first time. Feeling suddenly self-conscious, she looked away... only to muster her courage and look back at him boldly.

"What are you looking at me like that for?"

"I believe, Hermione, that you're the first person here who hasn't gone out of the way to tell me what a great man Black was." His eyes darted down to her lips briefly, causing her to moisten them unconsciously. "I find your insight to his true character, though you never really knew him, appealing."

"Well... thank you," she replied, moving a bit closer before she realized she was leaning in for a kiss. *What the hell am I doing?* she asked herself. Straightening back up, she added, "Besides, I'd always thought that he and Lupin had something going, what with the way Lupin acted after Sirius died. Of course, I never knew that he and Tonks had become so close."

"Lupin," Severus spat, shaking his head. "Of those I found most deplorable whilst in school, I suppose I can tolerate him the most, but I still dislike him on many levels. He's always been weak when it came to standing up to his friends and others, though he didn't mind occasionally joining in to taunt others if he was in the mood."

"People can change," Hermione said.

"Not often."

"You have."

"Not much."

"Much," she said, gazing down at the parchment. "Oh, good grief." She pointed to the next line that caught her attention. "Tell me your bed chambers aren't decorated anything like this?"

*Severus pulled Blaise to his bed and sat down to watch her dance out of her robes. She paused to look around. "Oh, Sevvie-Wewvie, but these lovely shades of pink and baby blue are just perfect. And just look at those light green Slytherin bed sheets! Why, all of these pastels tell me you are a much more sensitive man than I'd ever dreamed of."*

*Wondering what Hermione and Black were doing in her quarters, Severus allowed himself to be undressed and fondled.*

*"Oh, it's big," Blaise purred in her sexiest voice.*

*"Unhand me," he blurted, waving a hand to magically dress himself. "Get out!" Without looking to see if she complied, he ran as fast as he could to Hermione's quarters, blasted his way inside, and found her crying on her couch...alone.*

*"Severus?" she asked, looking up at him through teary eyes.*

*"Yes," he said, moving to kneel down by her.*

"I couldn't do it," she said.

"Nor I."

She sniffed loudly and wailed, "You mean you didn't sleep with her?"

"No, my sweet, she was not you. Her hands didn't hold Mr. Plonker the same way that yours do. He only wants Miss Puss to visit him. He belongs to her."

"Oh, Severus, you are my soul mate. I sometimes hate you, and through the years have tried to forget you, but it always comes back to you. I am forced to love you because higher beings say it must be so."

"My, God, I feel it, too. I fell for you so hard, so fast. Hell, I am hard just thinking of you."

Severus shook his head. "This author will become acquainted with the tip of my wand as soon as I am able to find out a name."

"I can't believe they'd make you into something soft like that. I doubt your declaration of love would be anything like that," Hermione said aloud, though she'd meant to simply think that. "Oh, sorry."

"So, by saying that in that manner, you are admitting that yours would be in such a fashion?"

"Of course not," she replied quickly. "I just imagine you to grab your witch around the waist, slam her against the wall roughly, and tell her something along the lines of, 'You are mine and will always be so.'"

"I am not incapable of tenderness, you know," he said in a bored voice. "In fact..."

His head lowered suddenly, and his lips grazed hers so softly that she had to wonder if they'd been there at all. He pulled back as quickly as he'd begun, leaving her confused and partly wanting to continue.

"That was..." His voice trailed away.

"Soft," she offered.

At the same instant, he murmured, "Inappropriate."

Clearing her throat, she gazed back at the parchment, embarrassed.

"Severus, I found out this evening that I am pregnant."

"But how? We only fucked those few times a few days ago."

"I suppose where there's a will, there's a way," Hermione said, rubbing her stomach. "The Mediwitch Poppy says that I'm having twins...a girl and a boy!"

"Oh, here we go with twins again. You'd think it's the most common thing in the world," Hermione said, shaking her head.

"Mediwitch Poppy?" Severus questioned snidely. "I had no idea that our matron changed professions."

"Don't be so particular," Hermione said, jabbing him with her elbow. "At least they aren't calling her a Healer."

"Back to the rubbish," he said, nodding to the parchment.

"This news makes me happy," Severus said, picking her up and whirling her around. "However, you and your actions with Black have displeased me."

"Nothing happened other than some kissing."

"That's bad enough."

"Well, what about you and Blaise? Should I not be upset about you and her?" she asked, jutting her chin up defiantly.

"You must be taught a lesson and punished."

"Yes, sir," Hermione said, suddenly taking on a submissive form, lowering herself to her knees before him to kiss his boots.

"Come, I shall strap you into my latest torture contraption, but being that you didn't allow the dog to touch you intimately and being that you are carrying my unborn children, I will only use a small flogger on your backside. No clamps, no anal sex as a form of punishment, and no spanking until you cry out in humiliation."

"Thank you, my most gracious master," Hermione said in gratitude. "I look forward to allowing you to degrade me."

"Who the hell wrote this shite?" Hermione said angrily, tossing the parchment across the room in a fit of rage. "If you ever," she wagged her finger at Snape, "think that I'll follow you around like some little dog, acting submissive, and allowing you to strap me up into anything or allow you to hit me, you've got another think coming." She could feel the heat radiating from her. "No man would ever force me into such a humiliating role! I fight for those who are downtrodden and sure as hell wouldn't willingly become one!"

Severus raised an eyebrow in shock in the beginning of her tirade, and before she'd finished, the other had moved up to join it, his mouth parting with his surprise.

"Oh, don't look at me like that! How would you like it if I tied you up and took a flogger to your body?" she asked heatedly.

"Is that a threat?" he asked dangerously, leaning closer. "Or a promise?"

"Whatever one you'd like," she said, leaning into him, lips crashing with his, hands tangling in each other's hair. Their kiss continued many minutes, resulting in several buttons of his shirt becoming unfastened and his hand finding its way beneath her blouse.

Hermione broke their kiss to moan slightly and arch back, giving him access to her throat. As soon as his lips began placing open-mouthed kisses across her flesh, she stilled, breathing heavily.

Foggily, Hermione realized just what she and he had been about. As they shifted and righted themselves, she felt the warmth spreading in her cheeks. Daring a glance at him, she saw that he was just as flustered, hair wildly sticking out all over, while he buttoned his shirt.

She began laughing. "Well, that was unexpected."

"It was..."

"If you say inappropriate, I think I'll kick your arse," she interrupted. Their bout of snogging had been amazing, causing her to want even more, though it was way too soon.

As he looked at her, she saw the devious glint in his eyes. "Why, Miss Granger," he began in mock surprise, "I never knew you were such a physical woman."

She pointed to his hair and began laughing. As he spoke to her, a few locks that were pointing straight up were bobbing about, making it look as if he had a few snakes dancing on top of his head.

While he smoothed down his hair, he nodded towards hers. "You might do the same. It makes you look..." His voice trailed away.

"Look what?" she asked, laughter receding as she ran her fingers through her hair. "Like an animal with a mane? Messy?"

"Bedded," he supplied for her.

The next word died on her lips. The way he'd said that one word and the way he'd looked at her when he'd said it sent shivers down her spine. "Oh," she murmured. "Well, almost anyway." She tried to smile to put him at ease. For some reason, it looked as if he'd bolt at any moment.

As he looked over at the strewn parchment, he smirked. "So passionate about things you believe in, aren't you?"

"I admit that I normally don't throw things," she said, grinning broadly. "I have no idea what got into me!"

"Perhaps we should stop reading. There's no telling what you might do next," he said, flicking his wand and organizing the parchment again.

"I believe, Severus, that it's much safer if we read," Hermione blurted without thinking. "Damn. I've been doing that a lot lately."

He said nothing but nodded towards the parchment. "Shall we?"

"Skip over anything where my character is being so submissive and allowing you to... you know."

"Ah, this looks interesting," Severus said, grin threatening to spread on his face.

"Oh, you would like that!" Hermione said with laughter. *"Severus punched Sirius numerous times and sent him falling backwards down the stairs. If Lupin hadn't been there snogging Tonks near a singing suit of armor, Sirius might have continued down the next flight. As it was, Lupin took one look at his old lover and told Tonks that he had to tend to him. Tonks stomped her feet in anger and said that she was going down to Hagrid's hut, whispering that she could morph herself into the size of woman he needed and wouldn't be waiting around for Lupin any longer."*

"You read that with amusement," Severus said.

"Well, yes, earlier I said that I'd always thought that maybe Sirius and Lupin were quite friendly. It's just odd that the author seems to think so as well."

"It seems that the author also has a thing for Hagrid. Why, that's the second time that he's mentioned in a sexual way," Severus said, shaking his head in annoyance and leaning forward to flip through the next few pages of parchment. "Good Lord," he said.

Hermione leaned closer and began snickering. The characters were all at the Three Broomsticks and drunk on butterbeer...something only a house-elf could get intoxicated on. "Wait, I'm supposed to be pregnant. What am I doing drinking? I wouldn't harm my unborn child that way!"

"Well, it's just butterbeer."

"Yes, but look." She pointed to one of the lines. "It says that Tonks and I are competing on who can get pissed quicker by doing shots. You, Sirius, Lupin, and Hagrid seem to be having a lively conversation. Hang on! How am I suddenly five months pregnant? I only told you the news a few pages back, right?"

He scowled and flipped forward a few pages. "Ah, I don't think you'll be wanting to read this one," he said quickly, turning to another page.

"What was it?" she asked. "You've got me curious now."

"No, really," he said, swatting her hands away.

"Am I tied up in some bondage contraption?"

He shook his head. "But it is yet another corny sex scene. I am offended, so I am certain that you would be as well."

Hermione stilled his hand with hers, lightly tracing his fingers before flipping back.

*Hermione howled like a wolf, competing with the sounds of Lupin's howling and Sirius' barking from the room next door to theirs, as Snape continued to lap the juices between her legs, not missing the lines that dripped down her thigh. Splaying the seeping folds apart, he flicked his weeping member over the puffed and used flesh before plunging in to the hilt and pounding her steadily into the mattress until the box spring beneath gave way, causing the bed to crash to the floor, echoing with their yells of orgasm.*

"You're right. I don't think I want to read this."

Severus' expression was indignant. "Can you believe that they likened us both to animals?" He nodded as if convincing himself. "That's right. You're howling like a bloody werewolf, and I'm lapping up juices like a fucking dog." He leaned back and crossed his arms over his chest. "The best thing about that paragraph was the word hilt."

Dumbfounded, Hermione's brow furrowed in confusion. "What's so good about a hilt?" she asked finally. The moment he smirked, she realized what he was referring to. "Oh, right. The Prince's sword!" She shook with laughter. "I'm starting to worry about you."

"How so?" he asked in amusement.

"Well, I suppose I'm lucky I'm not a princess. You'd be trying to sheath your sword to its hilt in my royal scabbard." They both snickered.

"I supposed I shouldn't have told you that," he said lightly with a shrug. "So long as it never leaves this room."

"Never, Majesty," she quipped. "At least you weren't a plonker, giving your name something extra ridiculous like, oh, Mr. Wiggly or something."

His eyes narrowed.

"And speaking of leaving this room, maybe we should try the door?"

"I just tried a little while ago," he confessed.

"Great, looks like we'll be spending another night in here," she said, stretching. "At least it was comfortable. Er... were you comfortable?"

"Until I woke, yes," he replied, adjusting the sleeves on his shirt so that the white peeked out from beneath the black of his robes a little more.

"Was it that bad waking up next to me?"

She'd intended the question to be friendly and joking, but it came out as a serious question, and by the way he was gauging his words, he was going to answer her seriously.

"It was unexpected," he finally said. "I fell asleep in my clothes on a couch across from you, and I woke on a bed in nightclothes right next to you."

Hermione smiled. "Well, I'm glad that you aren't saying it was horrible at least."

"Tonight might be a different story," he said calmly, flicking the parchment so that it landed on the small table near them.

"Why? I don't snore. Not that I know of anyway," she said, feeling a little nervous.

"The difference about tonight, Hermione, is that I will be lying next to you in bed while my mind plays over what happened between us earlier." He stood briskly. "Frankly, I am uncertain if I will be able to refrain from repeating it; thus, I'd be taking advantage of the situation."

*Whoa... Now that's a confession*, she thought to herself. How did she feel about that? "Taking advantage isn't always a bad thing. What's wrong with a bit of a snog amongst friends?" She grinned wickedly. "Oh, that's right. You aren't aware that we *are* friends."

"Those were not the words that I'd intended," he said quickly.

"Really. I understand," she said softly, rising. "I think I'll go have a bath and hopefully relax before reading any more of that story. It looks like we're nearly finished."

"I'm glad," he nodded.

"Yes, it is getting a bit tedious, isn't it?"

"Finishing it will enable us to leave the room," he commented. "At least, that is what I'm hoping." He looked around. "Strange room."

"I won't be long," she said, hurrying off to the bath. Once inside, she leaned back against the door. How soon was too soon to be with a man? Snogging would be all right, but what if they allowed it to carry on? "No, I won't," she whispered to herself. "Just some snogging. Nothing more."

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**Southern's Notes:** So many reasons for my delay in posting. I was working on another story for the ss/hg exchange, I was sick for a couple of days, my beta skipped town on me, I was working, and I was lazy. Plenty of excuses to choose from, mates. Sorry.

I've gone ahead and made a rough outline of the rest of the story. It appears that there will be one more chapter with them in the room and getting out. Then, I'll post the final chapter after that.

## Guiding Lumos

*Chapter 7 of 8*

Hermione and Severus are finally released from the room and are shocked with what they find.

**Disclaimer:** I've borrowed some of J.K.R.'s characters and am having a bit of fun with them. No Galleons are coming my way, and I shall return the characters shortly.

*Thanks to my beta, CocoaChristy, who has graciously stepped in for my busy beta, Charmed\_Nay.*

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"Nox," Severus said quietly, easing down next to her. She'd been unusually quiet since she'd taken her bath, and he was undecided if it bothered him or made things easier. He meant what he'd told her earlier. If he started something...even something as innocent as kissing...he was uncertain if he'd want to stop.

For a moment, he felt ridiculously nervous. There was no call for it, as all he needed to do was turn over and ignore the fact that her warm body was resting beside him...a body that could give him pleasure. Visions of sliding into her heated center passed through his mind, and he quickly shook them away.

He couldn't carry on that way with a colleague. Well, he could, but he couldn't do it *with this* colleague. Even as his mind tried to justify his reasoning as to why he shouldn't initiate anything more with Hermione, he thought of the way her cheeks reddened in indignation as she ranted about that submissive portion of the story. He'd enjoyed seeing the way her chest heaved, full breasts moving up and down with each breath. And the way they'd come together, lips, hands, and bodies moving together as if choreographed by passion itself. The way the flesh of her breast felt against his palm had nearly been his undoing. He felt himself tighten with arousal.

Turning to his side before he could change his mind, he leaned up on one elbow and placed the palm of his free hand on her face, which was already turned towards him as if expecting his action.

"I'm going to kiss you, Hermione Granger," he said, voice low. When she did nothing but lick her lips in anticipation, he lowered his head slowly, giving her time to change her mind if she needed it. He was uncertain what would happen between them, but he'd given her fair warning earlier that he was inclined to carnally know her fully if she allowed it. He hoped that she would.

He pressed his lips to hers in one soft, chaste kiss after another before parting his lips a little to suck and nibble on her lower lip, causing her mouth to open. When he deepened their kiss, tongue moving to explore her mouth, he felt a peculiar sensation sweep through him. His nerves were tingling with sensitivity while his mind was awakening to the idea that this was something different.

Or it could be something different...if he'd allow it to be. She'd seemed so disappointed when he'd alluded to the fact that he didn't want anything more, even friendship, once they left the room. It was his gut instinct that if he would but ask, she could be his for something that would last more than one awkward night. Dare he try?

Moaning in frustration when he ended the kiss, Hermione said, "Do it again."

A chaste kiss was all he gave her before resting his forehead against hers. "This is very tempting, but I think that I should bring things to a halt now whilst we still have our wits about us."

"We're both consenting adults here," she replied, bringing a hand up to slowly rub his back. "I've not felt so good for so long. You make me feel..."

"What?" he prodded when her voice trailed away.

"Confused."

It was not the answer he wanted to hear, but he could certainly understand how she was feeling, for he felt very much confused where she was concerned. Moving his lips to her earlobe, he whispered, "I want very much to have you." He punctuated his words by nuzzling the flesh below her ear, eliciting a moan of pleasure from her. From the way she arched against him and responded to his voice and touches, he knew that she could be his, and for some reason, knowing that was enough for him... for now.

"Oh," she said, hands clutching the fabric of his nightshirt tightly.

Flicking his tongue over her lobe and tracing the outline of her ear before moving back to whisper, "But I think that to do so here and now would change things between us. I am uncertain if it would be for the best."

"I-I want you, too," she replied in an attempt to weaken his resolve.

"Perhaps we can come to some arrangement...outside of this room?" It was then that he pulled back to look at her, noting her flushed face and wide eyes. "You mentioned having dinner together and possibly being friends after we leave this room."

"Friends?" she asked dazedly.

"At first..." he said in what he hoped was a suggestive voice. The instant she smiled in agreement, he kissed her again, sealing their decision to take things slowly. Although his penis didn't seem to understand why it was not being satisfied, his mind took pleasure in holding her intimately during the night, occasionally kissing or caressing her lightly and having her reciprocate in kind.

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Hermione giggled as she read the first paragraph in the eighty-ninth chapter of the story. "Now, we have to learn about the Chudley Cannons and what a great team they are?"

Severus snickered. "This author must have taken a hallucinogen. They are a bunch of no talent fools who think riding a broom is..."

Hermione gasped. "Look at this!"

Ronald Weasley flew his broom over towards the stands and waved at Hermione. Even though his bulging eyes were looking at her big, wide, round pregnant stomach, he sensed the sneaky Snitch passing by him and snatched it from thin air. It was the fastest the Cannons had ever won a game. The crowd went wild...even the twins in Hermione's stomach were cheering Uncle Won-Won on his success by moving about.

"It has to be him," Severus said certainly.

"Well, it's definitely someone who knows all of us closely." She frowned. "But why would they put him as the Seeker? He's a Keeper."

Severus shrugged. "Personally, I can't see as how they would put Weasley on any Quidditch team."

Flipping through a few more pages, Hermione said, "I've noticed that there is never any mention of the ghosts at Hogwarts. Why would they be excluded? They're very much a part of our lives here."

Severus looked about suspiciously and raised his voice somewhat, "And they'd better not have anything to do with us being locked into this room either."

She grinned and groaned as something in the text caught her eye.

Hermione yelled as she saw the cauldron's liquid bubbling and heard it hissing dangerously. "It's going to explode!" she screeched. The only problem was that she had been standing on top of a tall ladder putting Snape's ingredients in order. She couldn't run to safety.

Severus couldn't reach her in time. In her panic to get down, she slipped and fell backwards, hitting her head as she did so. The instant he got to her side, the cauldron blew up with a loud bang, reminding him of the days when Neville Longbottom used to be in his classroom. Luckily, he was able to selflessly cover most of her body from the contents of the potion with his own.

"My God! The babies! I must get her to St. Mungo's," he said aloud, easily lifting his hefty load up and dashing off to the grate with her. "Widenupikus!" he called out just before he got there. The fireplace widened and enabled him to enter with ease while still holding her.

"You know, why didn't I see this coming?" Hermione asked, smirking at his horrified expression. "They are obviously trying to find something else to make the plot interesting now that they are nearing a hundred chapters and have used up many different plotlines."

Severus replied, tone bored, "I'm sure she'll be fine." His eyebrows rose. "If the author planned on killing her off, there wouldn't be all of this left," he said, pointing at the thick, unread portion that remained.

"I just don't know what more there could be," she said, turning a few pages. "Oh, look. We're parents," she teased, nodding to the paragraph. "Here. I'll read it to you. 'Severus looked down at his daughter and smiled. She had inherited the black color of his hair, but it lay in curly waves against her head. He was glad that she had her mother's curls, and from a look at her eyes, he saw that they were black like his. His son on the other hand had brown eyes like his mother, and his hair was brown like Hermione's, too, but it was straight and lank like Severus' own. Proudly, he looked over at his worn out wife who was sleeping away her exhaustion. He wondered when she'd be able to spread those legs and let him have some sex again.'"

"So," he began, horrified expression in place, "they are the perfect mix of each of us then."

"Uh-huh," she replied. "It could very well turn out like that, I suppose. Genetics and all that, but it's a little too neatly done."

"Oh, I'm sure," he said sarcastically. "Little matching replicas of us. Why, I'll bet they'll even have a perfect blend of our demeanors...one being a Potions expert and the other being a librarian."

"Well, if the author had given one of them bright green eyes or red hair, you'd be accusing me of shagging Ron or Harry!" Hermione said, grinning as his expression soured even more.

"Don't speak of them and sex at the same time," he said, wrinkling his nose. "What's next in the story?"

"It appears that this chapter is coming from Crookshanks's point of view."

Severus grumbled, "Who cares what a cat thinks?"

"Well, for one, I care," Hermione said firmly. "He's got feelings, too, you know!"

"Is that right? When he's cleaning himself, do you think he..." He abruptly stopped talking. He'd been about to ask a rather lewd question. *What's gotten into me? One night of near intimacy, and I become this comfortable with her?*

She bit her lip in an attempt to keep from laughing. Suddenly, her cheeks pinked in a becoming blush.

"What are you thinking?" he asked.

"I'd rather not say," she said evasively.

"Oh, I think you want to say, but you're too embarrassed." When she averted her eyes, he continued. "Did your dear familiar happen upon you whilst in a... compromising position?"

She nodded. "He seemed affronted!"

Severus pictured the orange fur ball pouncing up onto her bed as she pleased herself, pausing in amazement and wondering what she was doing. Changing the subject, he pointed at the parchment. "It appears that we cannot agree on names for our children."

"Good grief. They are debating on Severmione Janobias Snape for the daughter and Herverus Tobane Snape for the boy." She frowned. "Parents don't really go through all this trouble to name their children after them do they? I mean, these names are atrocious."

"I have no idea what these berks are about." Shaking his head, he added, "And they are already arguing over what House the children will be sorted into."

Once their laughter subsided, an awkward silence ensued. He began remembering their shared kisses and wondered if she was doing the same at that very moment. *She would have been willing. How could I have turned away from that?* he asked himself. Another voice reasonably answered, *Because she is your coworker. You can't honestly be thinking of anything further. It would complicate things. When you would have enough, she would be unwilling to let go.*

His brow furrowed slightly. *Before anything has started, I'm already thinking of ending it.*

"What's wrong?" Hermione asked, watching him carefully.

"Nothing," he said abruptly, unable to voice what had been on his mind. Instead, he busied himself with the story again.

Hermione and Severus had a beautiful wedding. Her wedding party was made up of Ginny, Parvati, Lavender, and the two Gryffindor girls that also shared her dorm with her back at Hogwarts. Severus had Remus, Harry, Ron, Arthur Weasley, and Kingsley Shacklebolt on his side.

The best surprise for everyone was when Hagrid came riding in on Sirius' old motorbike.

"Hang on," Hermione said. "I thought Hagrid was killed in one of the other chapters by that disgruntled centaur?"

"Apparently, he has pulled a Dark Lord and has returned from the beyond," Severus said dryly. "It seems that our author's imagination knows no bounds."

"I'll say," she agreed.

To his surprise, she reached over and took his hand in hers, tracing the back of his hand with the pad of her thumb. The tickly sensation from such a soft touch was overwhelming. What magic was afoot in the room? He would have to clear his mind and think things over once they escaped. It was possible that they were under the influence of magic, and he would not allow himself to carry on like a fool only to be rebuffed.

Unable to resist, however, he clasped his fingers over hers and scooted a little closer. "Shall we?"

Severus sat back against the headboard...still wearing his Hermione's fluffy, pink bathrobe...and debated on telling her the news he'd learned.

"What are you laughing at?" Severus asked, mocking indignation.

"Oh, I just never thought you'd be the pink type. I think our author enjoys pastels... especially where you're concerned."

"Pity," he said blandly. "I'm partial to black and grey. Therefore, it must be one of your miscreant friends responsible for this."

"But why would they pair me with you?" she blurted.

"Why wouldn't they?" he countered, not allowing her to snatch her hand away.

"Well, we've never gotten on." She shrugged. "What I mean to say is that..."

"Yes?"

"I'm glad that we were stuck in this room together, Severus," she confessed. "If... if this wouldn't have happened, we might never have attempted to talk like this, to get to know each other, or to... er... you know, snog."

"Liked that, did you?" he asked smugly, noting her eyes had taken on a dreamy look.

"You know I did," she said, easing closer.

Their faces were so close; she only had to pucker her lips to graze his.

"I did," he admitted. "However, I must wonder if some trickery is occurring."

Breaking the spell, she moved back to look at him, eyes clear of her daze. "What do you mean?" she asked uncertainly.

"I believe we shall talk about that later... after we leave this room," he said firmly.

After putting the babies to sleep, Hermione made her way to join her lover in their bed. "It's about time we have a moment," she said quietly, pulling her nightdress away. "Though I have only given birth last night to two large babies, I can't stop myself from wanting to make love to you."

"I would accept your invitation, my dear, but we must talk about something," Severus replied, taking off the purple bathrobe and handing it to his wife to cover her naked body from his eyes, which didn't really mind looking at her because she was sexy.

"Forgot they used pink a while ago," Hermione commented eliciting a snort from her companion.

"Oh, my word," Hermione breathed. "Something must be terribly wrong for you to deny me! Dang!"

"I am not really denying you, for I am the one who is being denied by not accepting what you are giving and in denying you. So, you see, it's me who's getting the denying done to him and not the one doing the actual denying. Savvy?"

"Perfectly."

"It appears that an old escaped Death Eater that everyone forgot about is on the loose, and he sent this letter to say that there will be hell to pay! He means to abduct our children... or you!" he said, crumpling the letter that had appeared in his hand.

"Well, he's the fool for warning us!"

"Yes," Severus agreed. "I will make him rue the day that he came up against me." He shook his fist at the ceiling as if ex-Death Eater Joe Blow could see him. "You'll always remember that this day was the day that you almost tricked Severus Tobias Sexonlegrus Snape!"

Hermione had broken into a peal of laughter at the author's latest idiocy. Fearing that she was unable to catch her breath, Severus began to tap her on the back with his palm. "Are you quite all right?" he asked when she was finally breathing steadily.

"Yes, I just...Severus! The door! It's open!" she exclaimed, jumping up and sending parchment flying about.

He followed suit, wand drawn. Flicking his wand, he said, "It's open. No tricks!"

A change passed over them immediately, and he thought that it might be as he feared: their comradeship being only the working of magic.

"I almost hate to leave," she said softly from behind him.

He turned around to face her. "Even so, collect the parchment. I believe we have someone to see about this!"

She quickly collected the parchment and followed him out of the room. When they rounded the corridor, they met up with a humming Dumbledore who seemed quite interested in a painting.

"Severus! Back so soon?" he greeted jovially. "Hello, Miss Granger."

"Back so soon?" Severus questioned dubiously. "So, you *are* the one behind this nonsense!"

Dumbledore looked from one to the other and calmly said, "I'm afraid I don't understand."

Hermione spoke then. "Sir, we've been trapped inside that room for over two days! Surely you noticed our absence, right?"

"I am just on my way back to the staff room. Severus left my office only a few minutes ago. It seemed that the papers that I'd thought were in my office were forgotten back in the staff room." He looked at Severus. "Did you find them?"

"Before I could get there, I ran into Hermione, and she brought *these* papers to my attention!" He pointed a long finger at the stack of parchments she held against her chest. "It appears that someone here at Hogwarts decided to write a long tale of rubbish about us and our lives! I, for one, believe you are behind this travesty!"

Dumbledore reached forward and gestured for the parchments. "May I?" he asked kindly. When Hermione handed them to him, he looked them over briefly, the seriousness leaving his face to be replaced by mirth.

"Think that's funny, do you?" Severus said, unimpressed by the headmaster's reaction. "I demand to..."

"You really had me going there," Dumbledore said. His eyes lingered on Hermione for a moment. "Asking Miss Granger to go along with things was a good touch. I would never have suspected her to be the type to play pranks."

"Pranks?" Hermione and Severus questioned in unison.

The laughter faded from the headmaster's face as Severus snatched the parchments from him. "Those are the papers of approval that the Ministry sent." He pointed to the seal. "See? I told you they would approve of your project." He looked at Hermione and confided, "Severus is trying to develop a potion that will enable time travel again, as their attempts have failed miserably. He needed permission from the Ministry, of course, to go ahead with his testing."

"But this was not what was on these parchments!" Severus said, stunned expression on his face. "There were pages upon pages of written fiction."

"Indeed?" Dumbledore asked with a chuckle.

"Yes," Hermione said seriously. She backed up and pointed towards the adjacent corridor. "We've been locked away in that room there reading for the past three days. Look. It's just there."

Dumbledore looked at the stones lining the walls. "There's no doorway."

Severus and Hermione exchanged looks of shock.

"Maybe you should both see Poppy," Dumbledore advised. "I wouldn't put it past some of our more clever students to play a prank on their professors. Let's hope nothing serious has been cast." He nodded. "I must be off. Good evening." Humming, he quickly departed.

"Can you believe this?" she asked, not really expecting a reply.

"Someone will pay for making a fool of me," Severus said, turned on his heel, and left her standing alone in the corridor.

A feeling of disappointment settled over her. *He's free of the room now, so he figures he's free of me.* She'd been a fool to think that he was acting seriously. And what had he been saying about trickery?

The soft tones of a silky voice broke through her pondering. "Are you coming, Hermione?" he asked from behind her. "I believe we have arrangements for dinner?"

She turned to look into his eyes and was surprised to see sincerity. "Yes, I thought it might have slipped your mind."

"Only for a moment." He gave her a small smile. "Come. We must begin plotting our revenge."

Hermione quickly moved to his side as they made their way down to his quarters. She gave the corridor one last glance and found no proof that any door had ever existed. She vowed that she would return later to explore everything thoroughly. For now, she had a date with destiny.

Southern's Notes: I definitely intend to reveal who was behind the story and the secrets to the private room. I'm going to let you guess for a couple of days before I upload the epilogue, which is already written. Teehee! Thanks so much for reading. I am truly sorry for the delay. I had many issues, but they are mostly all settled now, giving me plenty of free time.

Stop by my LJ if you'd like. Cheers!

<http://www.livejournal.com/users/southernwitch69/>

Christy's Notes: I have absolutely adored this story! And I can say, the ending is brilliant!! I can't wait to see the guesses...

One Life to Live Together

Chapter 8 of 8

Severus and Hermione finally learn the truth behind the story.

Disclaimer: Not mine and all that good stuff.

Thanks go to my brilliant beta, Charmed_Nay.

□

Hermione gently rubbed her bulging stomach with both hands in slow, small circles, grinning broadly as she did so. She was well into her second trimester of pregnancy, and at certain moments, she still couldn't believe that there truly was a little miracle growing inside of her. The previous scan she'd had the day before had measured the baby's growth and enabled her to see her soon-to-be son's developing form, guaranteeing her that this was happening, that she and Severus would be parents soon.

"I don't know that I've ever seen you this content," Severus commented.

"Well, I'm sure that I have been," she said with a small smile. "Hmmm," she added, "perhaps just not in the same way."

"Sometimes it's still a little surreal," he agreed, tossing his book aside. "Why don't we take a walk this evening? We've not left our chambers all day."

"All right," Hermione agreed, extending her hands to him as he offered to help her up from her seated position.

Walking in companionable silence, they made their way up into the castle and over towards the headmaster's tower, on which its roof held one of their favorite spots to sit and watch the different shades expand over the horizon near dusk.

"Good God!" Hermione said, pausing mid-stride.

"What is it? Something wrong with the baby?" Severus asked in alarm.

"No," she said in a whisper, pointing a shaky finger towards the doorway nearest them. "After seven years, it's back!" Just as she stepped towards it to investigate, Severus pulled her back.

"Certainly not. You don't think I'm falling for that again!" He pulled his wand and moved it about in a series of flicks and swishes. "I detect no enchantments whatsoever," he said after a moment. "However, we won't be going in."

"But there must be something it wants us to do," she said, curiosity getting the better of her. "We can't just pass it by and not see what it wants!"

"Yes, Hermione, we can and will," he said firmly. "The last time we were in there, we were there for three nights...or so we thought...but no time passed here." His voice softened. "While I'm grateful it had its part in helping us to get to know each other, I simply can't condone something that I don't fully understand, something that manipulated our time and lives."

"You're still bitter that the headmaster, nor anyone else for that matter, doesn't believe us about being locked in a nonexistent room." She placed a hand over her mouth to stifle her giggles. "To this day he thinks a student Confunded us!"

"Do you want to go in there and risk being stuck in there for a couple of months? How would you like to remain there until you've birthed our son...without any potions to help the pain or without medical assistance? Only then to come out and have things go back to how they are at this exact moment?" He arched an eyebrow while awaiting her answer.

"Not when you put it that way. No. I would never endanger the baby. I just wan..." She began looking around frantically. "It's gone!"

He turned back and glanced at the solid stone wall in surprise, no evidence of a door ever being there. Pulling his wand again, he tested the wall much as he had years before. "And so it remains a mystery," he said softly. "Come."

Hermione followed him up to the tower where they sat together and watched the different hues in the sky overlap as day fled in night's wake. Though he was quiet, she was certain that he was thinking of the room and what it meant that it had shown itself to them once again. There had to be a reason.

"It's been seven years," she said softly. "Maybe it appears every seven years?"

"For only an instant?"

"Well, last time, when you pulled me in, it's possible that it had just appeared." She frowned. "Though time passed for us, it didn't pass for the castle. If we'd stayed in the corridor watching for a while, we might have seen it appear again, which is what it did last time...to let us out."

"Perhaps it only appeared again because it *had* to let us out," he replied.

"Possibly," she conceded. "I just hate not knowing."

"We never could find any information on it in any of the Hogwarts books, but it's as the headmaster said. There are many things about the castle and its magic that we will never know."

"I wonder," she said after a moment, "if it works something like the Room of Requirement. What were you thinking of as we walked down the corridor? Was there something that needed to be addressed or remedied?"

"Thinking about? Well, if you must know, I was thinking that we haven't much time left together before the baby arrives, and I was planning to make the most of it." He shrugged. "It's not that I think things will change. Actually, I know they will, and I suppose that does bother me on some level." He cast a nervous glance at her. "Not that I mind having this child. It's just..."

"Just what?" she prodded gently.

"It's only been us for all these years, and now I'll have to share you." He looked into the distance. "That sounds completely selfish, doesn't it?"

"No, it's actually understandable. This will be a big change for us." She reached for his hand and squeezed it within both of hers. "We'll get used to things, and trust me when I say that we'll be good parents."

He nodded and placed his other hand on top of hers. "Tell me, my dear, what you were thinking of."

"Oh." Blushing, she admitted, "I was thinking that there wouldn't be many walks or peaceful interludes for us after the baby's born... not right away anyway. I was also thinking about how time is flying by so quickly and how there was still so much to do before he gets here: his room, the right equipment, his clothing, and just so many other little things that we need to do."

"So, it was time that we both wanted then. It is possible that it was trying to give us some time together. What were you thinking of last time?" he asked.

"Ha! I was quite angry that someone had written all that rubbish about me and wanted to see the headmaster about it."

"I was annoyed that I had to walk back to the staff room to fetch the papers he'd claimed were in his office in the first place. That's when I saw you." He pulled a hand away and lifted it to rub his chin. "So... we weren't thinking of the same thing at that moment. I suppose that theory is out."

"Maybe not. You became angry about the parchments as well. We both wanted to get to the bottom of it and see the guilty party punished. It's possible that it could have appeared in that instant without us knowing."

"Indeed," he agreed. "We'll have to test this out of course."

Hermione eagerly nodded her agreement, though her smile faded. "But that still doesn't explain the parchment. Who Transfigured it from the Ministry's approval papers for your time manipulating potion to that rubbish?"

"I've often thought that Rolanda and Minerva had something to do with it. They both seemed to cast knowing glances our way for a while after that," he said.

"Yes, but it would have taken more time than that to think out the horrid plot and change all those pages. Minerva's good, but she's not that good. You left with the headmaster before she joined Sinistra and Hooch. They were snickering even before that. Mind, it could have been that they were plotting it out, but I don't think so. They had the parchments already." She frowned. "Minerva walked over to them after. I'm not sure that Austrina or Rolanda is all *that* apt with Transfiguration."

"True," he conceded. "I suppose we'll never know." His eyes narrowed. "I'd still like to find out who was behind that, as I have a couple of nasty hexes I created just for them."

Hermione snickered as she lost herself in memory. "After all this time, you have to admit that it was amusing."

His frown lifted into a smile. "I suppose I can look back at it now and see it for its entertainment value; although I disliked it back then." He stood. "Come. Night is upon us. I don't want you to get a chill."

~o~

Watching Severus as he bent over his desk and scratched away on an unfortunate student's essay, Hermione thought back to the first time they'd made love. Just recalling the memory brought chills to her skin and tingles to her stomach. It hadn't taken long for them to approach the subject of sex, having both admitted to wanting it while captives in that room. As he'd nestled between her thighs and positioned himself, he'd lifted his head to gaze at her, black eyes heavily lidded with an equal mixture of lust and emotion. It was the first time that he'd truly knocked down all the walls surrounding him, giving her access to all of him, body and soul. She'd in turn smiled, wrapped her legs around his waist to pull him closer and slightly into her, and lovingly caressed his bare back, noting that he was trembling a little...just as she.

"And just what has you looking like the Kneazle who ate the Augurey?"

"Honestly?"

He sneered and said sarcastically, "No, lie to me. Tell me anything but what you're truly thinking of."

"I was reminiscing about the first time we made love."

His sneer transformed into a smirk. "Is that what you call it? Lovemaking? As I recall, it was a right heated coupling. Perhaps we should refer to it as lust-releasing, hmmm?"

"You loved me even then," she said confidently. "Admit it."

The chiming of the clock on the wall interrupted his reply. "That reminds me," he said, rising from his chair. "I retrieved something from our vault earlier when I went to Diagon Alley. Something for the baby."

"Oh?" She sat up straighter. "Let's see then."

"It was my mother's. He'll not be able to use it for a while yet, but I thought... I thought it might look nice on the shelf opposite the windows." He turned to pull the small portrait away from the wall behind his desk to reveal the small vault he used to store important things.

She could tell that he was trying to sound indifferent about it, but the soft look in his eyes belied his fondness for the object. Hermione quickly schooled her expression to look pleased whether it was something ghastly or not, as she could always move it later to a place less noticeable.

"Here it is," he said, pulling a small snow globe from within. "It's something my father bought her. She liked it even though it did nothing fantastic, save snow if it's shaken or play music if this is turned." He quickly wound the small golden rod beneath it, eliciting a soft melody from the globe.

Hermione was certain it was something she'd heard at one time or another and smiled, feeling tears in her eyes. It definitely had to mean something to him to save a Muggle gift and for him to give it to their baby. "I'll make certain to play it for him often. I like it very much."

"See how the maiden dances while the music plays?" He arched an eyebrow. "It broke, and she had to fix it with magic to make certain it worked. I'll just pick it up until we're finished with everything in the room."

"All right," she agreed, wiping her eyes.

"Heh, look at what I have here," he said as he placed it back inside.

She saw him extract a large stack of parchments. "Those aren't those Ministry approval sheets?" she asked incredulously. "It's been years since you've tossed them inside!"

"Along with the phial of potion that I never could get to work properly," he said sourly. "Perhaps I should look into it again."

Suddenly inspired, Hermione laughed loudly and said, "Goodness, but I've got an idea."

"Oh?"

Pointing her wand at the stack, she Transfigured the used parchments into blank sheets. "What say we have a bit of fun, Severus?"

"Explain."

"Let's try to reconstruct that ghastly story."

"You want to waste time writing something so ridiculous?" He cocked his head to the side and arched an eyebrow. "I am certain I can think of something else to occupy us."

"Later," she said and moved to sit next to his desk. Holding out her hand, she said, "Come on then. Give me some of that. I'm sure it doesn't matter if our plot is in order or not. Whomever wrote that other one didn't do a good job with that anyway." She smirked. "Having just read Lord of the Rings again, I think I want to try to write out that whole me going back in time to save Middle Earth plot. Always did fancy Legolas, you know."

Severus glared at her and sat behind his desk again, dipping his quill in ink. "Since you are obviously so fond of men with long, blond hair, I shall write that part about you and Lucius, making certain he looks the fool."

After two hours, Hermione stretched. "I think I need to get up for a bit and maybe use the loo."

"I'm a bit tired. We can always pick up on this in the morning," he replied.

"Oi! What's this?" she asked, pointing to his parchment.

"Whatever do you mean?" he asked defensively.

"Making your male bits into something outrageously large, are you?"

His eyes narrowed. "Are you trying to imply that I am not large?"

"No, not implying that at all." She waggled her eyebrows. "But if *any* man undressed and showed me something this big," she indicated the parchment, "I would run screaming from the room."

"The point is to be extremely absurd, is it not?" he asked, still slightly offended.

Changing tactics, she said, "Yes, so don't forget to make certain to be absurd with everything else: pastel colors in your room and the like." She yawned. "Best we don't read what we've each written just yet. We can piece them together and sit by the fire after it's all done and have a laugh... like we did in the room."

"I agree," he said thoughtfully before looking down at his parchment and quickly beginning to scratch away, obviously inspired. "I need to name it, and I've just remembered the other name: Plonker."

Hermione simply grinned and left him with his muse.

~o~

"Severus? Are you there?"

"I'm here," he replied, moving into view of his fireplace. "What is it, Headmaster?"

"Hermione let slip to me that you were thinking about looking into your potion again?"

Severus glared at the closed bedroom door, wishing she could see his expression. He'd told her to mention their decision to no one else...in case they failed. He didn't feel up to admitting his failure to Dumbledore again, as then he'd have to answer the man's pesky questions and detail everything.

"I'm not certain," Severus finally said. "She shouldn't have said anything at all until we made a decision for sure."

"Believe me, Severus, it was an accident," Hermione said as she came into the room.

"Come up to the staff room and have some tea with me," Dumbledore said. "Bring your notes and what you have of the potion with you."

Once the headmaster's face left the flames in the hearth, Severus turned to Hermione. "I don't appreciate this."

She passed by, unimpressed with his scowl, and picked up her stack of parchment from the table. "Have you finished the last thing you were writing up?" she asked sweetly, attempting to sway his mood.

"Yes, I did." He pulled his wand and summoned his stack. "We won't have time to do this now. It seems we have to go discuss the bloody potion with Albus in the staff room."

"I have a better idea," she began, slowly walking towards him and then placing a hand on his cheek. "Why don't we bring the story with us? While you go over your new notes with the headmaster, I'll put these into order, and after you're finished, we'll head up to our tower and read over some of it." She placed a kiss on his lips. "All right?"

"Very well," he said, enjoying the feel of her hard, round belly pressing against him. "Take this then while I get my notes and the phial."

~o~

"But, Severus, if what you're saying is accurate, there was no reason why it shouldn't have worked," Dumbledore said, pointing to the parchment in front of him.

"I tested it several times, and the results were never the same. This last batch made something disappear, yes, but I've no idea what time it went to, and it never resurfaced again."

Hermione stifled a yawn. Severus and Dumbledore had been talking for nearly three hours, and she was certain they'd each said the same things twenty times. She'd been

amusing herself with reading parts of the story that Severus had written, but she was quite tired of sitting down.

"Excuse me, you two, but I believe I'm ready to return to our chambers," she interrupted politely.

"Yes, of course, my dear," Dumbledore said kindly. "Perhaps you could explain to Severus what I've been trying to say. It seems he doesn't want to listen to me."

"I would, but I'm in agreement with Severus. We set up tests and were disappointed each time," she said with a smile.

"As I've been saying..." Severus began.

"Indeed, indeed." He stood, taking the phial from the table and holding it up to the light. He uncorked it and sniffed the contents, making an expression of distaste as he did so. Suddenly, he turned the phial upside down, spilling most of the contents on the stack of parchment Hermione had placed on the table. "Oh, dear me."

Severus attempted to snatch the parchment away before much damage was done, but with a small pop, the entire stack disappeared, leaving the three staring at each other in astonishment.

"Still works, doesn't it?" the headmaster asked with a smug smile.

"We knew it sent off items already," Severus said heatedly. "I've been telling you that. We simply have no way of knowing when or where!"

"Severus..." Hermione said, tugging on his sleeve.

"I believe that your wife knows exactly what's happened."

"We're in the staff room," she said, eyes wide.

He eyed her warily. "Yes, Hermione, I know where we are. Are you... feeling well?"

"No, I mean, that's where the parchment was...the story that they were reading that night. They'd picked it up from this table and started reading."

"Which would explain why the papers I sought were suddenly not in my office and why I'd sent you back to the staff room to search for them there," Dumbledore said.

"So," Severus began, taking the phial from the headmaster, "this potion can send something back seven years in time then. With a little manipulating of its ingredients, we could likely change that to something more recent." He frowned. "But the parchment? Where is it now?"

Hermione said, "I'll bet if we look in the vault again, it will be there...just as we placed it years ago."

"How does this all tie in with that room?" Severus wondered aloud.

"You're not still going on about that room?"

"Yes, Headmaster," Hermione said, pointing a finger, "we've been telling you the truth, and just as we said, it reappeared to us last week."

"Though nothing we've tried since has helped to open it again," Severus added.

"Perhaps then, it is simply another mystery of the castle," Dumbledore conceded.

"Perhaps," Hermione agreed. "Come. Let's go see if the parchment is truly there."

"I will speak with you about this tomorrow, Headmaster," Severus said as he took Hermione by the hand. "It seems that we should collaborate after all."

"Yes, you seem to forget that I was once a brilliant alchemist. Off with you now."

They quickly made their way back to their chambers where Severus quickly pulled the portrait away from the wall and opened the small vault. "It's here," he said, slightly shocked. "And it's back to the Ministry papers again. The story's gone." He smirked. "I suppose your Transfiguration wasn't strong enough to withstand the test of time, eh?"

"Oh, no... Do you know what this means?" Hermione asked, laughing loudly. "Good grief, but I never expected this."

Severus' smirk faded, replaced by a look of annoyance, and he shook his head in disbelief. "This means that we are the dunderheads who wrote that horrid story in the first place!"

Southern's Notes: Well, there you have it. Of course they were the ones to write this crazy story, the poor souls. Sorry it's been so long since my last update. I could list many excuses, but I won't bore you with them. Thank you for reading. I appreciate all the reviews and all the requests made to add in. My biggest thank you goes to my yahoo!group, Potter_Place. The members there helped me compile the original list of things we didn't like to see in stories, what were clichés, and stuff we wanted to poke fun at. Cheers, all!