

Sweet and Sour

by Dreamy_Dragon

Kneazle hair does not a happy Potions master make.

One

Chapter 1 of 1

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A/N: The Potterverse belongs to JKR, I only borrow.

Written for Madeleone's Snowflake Challenge prompt from long ago: "How Severus and Hermione make up after a disagreement"

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The front door closed with a mighty bang that had the doorframe shaking.

'Fine,' muttered Severus stalking off in direction of the living room to contemplate the idiocy of women in general and one Hermione Granger in particular. On his way, he made a detour through the kitchen to fetch a bottle of Ogden's which turned out to be both empty and the last one in the house.

'Of course.' He gave the empty bottle a reproachful look.

He made himself a cuppa instead after he had located a clean mug at the back of the cupboard. Picturing Hermione's disapproving frown, he added an extra sugar, and then two more before he took it over to the sofa in the living room.

Crookshanks was curled up in the armchair before the fireplace, with only his back and a pointed ear visible.

Severus regarded the half-Kneazle over the rim of his mug. 'It's all your fault,' he informed Crookshanks.

No reaction.

'You and Hermione could run a competition of who sheds more. It's bad enough that there's hair on every robe, every cushion and every pillow in this house. And of course neither of you ever sees the problem.'

Not so much as the twitch of an ear.

'But I draw a line at hair near any one of my cauldrons.' He took a sip from his mug and winced at the sweet taste.

In retrospect, he might have phrased his criticism slightly different. First, he had informed her in no uncertain terms about the dangers of stray hair of any kind in close proximity to a bubbling cauldron before he called both her hair and her beloved familiar "an unmitigated menace that made Medusa look fluffy in comparison."

For some reason things had become a bit heated afterwards, and more words had been had. But surely, pointing her wand at some of his stored potions, making them

explode and then vanish in a huff of smoke was a tad excessive?

Severus cast another gloomy look in the direction of a snoring Crookshanks and decided that it was time to counteract the sugary liquid currently swirling through his stomach with something savoury.

An inspection of the fridge showed that it was mostly empty except for two take-away containers that contained leftovers. Severus took one out, opened it and gave its contents an investigating sniff. Fried rice that had very clearly overstayed its welcome. Scrunching up his nose, he threw both containers into the bin before he vanished its contents with a wandless Scourgify.

Chinese did sound good though. Now where was that take-away menu? Or maybe going elsewhere would be a good idea? Mr Yong was a friend of Hermione's. But then again, the Golden Dragon was the only decent Chinese restaurant for miles.

Severus' thoughts wandered back to the day he had found his former student standing in his favourite Muggle restaurant. He barely had time to notice that Miss Granger had turned into a lovely woman before the barrage of questions as to his whereabouts since the war had begun. His monosyllabic and increasingly sarcastic answers hadn't deterred the woman in the slightest. He would have left. Well, with hindsight, he *should* have left, but he had been hungry, so his empty stomach was to blame for his very un-Slytherin error of judgment that day.

Their squabbling had gone on for so long that Mr Yong had suggested that, perhaps, they would care to have their meal on the premises?

Before he knew it, he and Hermione were sat at a table, a veritable feast in front of them. Their squabble was quickly dissolved by delectable dumplings, scrumptious seafood and delicious duck. The excellent wine helped as well. During several courses, they had realised that they a) both adored Chinese food and a good vintage, b) loved books, c) had no patience with bureaucrats of all sorts and d) were rather intrigued by each other. Which had been the start to things progressing rather nicely from there.

Though she had never officially moved in, Hermione basically lived at his house these days as did her familiar.

One day, Hermione had arrived with a hissing wicker basket floating behind her. Before Severus had had time to ask what was in it, a giant ginger cat had emerged from it, given Severus a once-over and then proceeded to ignore him as he had made himself at home. Which, according to Hermione, was practically a declaration of eternal love compared to the way Crookshanks had treated her former boyfriends.

Severus didn't mind Crookshanks apart from the hair; mostly things had been just fine in the Snape-Granger household.

Until today.

It had started -- as these things usually do -- with a mere triviality. Nothing really. Hermione had complained that she couldn't find the latest *Arithmancy Quarterly* because Severus' stuff was strewn all over the place. He had pointed out that he was working from home and hence needed the space. Hermione stated that there would be more space if he weren't so messy. At which point Kneazle hair had been mentioned. The conversation had deteriorated rather rapidly after that.

Severus rifled through a stack of brochures on the kitchen table. The damn menu still wasn't there. Perhaps back in the living room? At last, he located it beneath a stack of old copies of *The Quibbler*.

And where the hell was his coat? Going out in robes tended to get him strange looks from the neighbouring Muggles. No coat or jacket could be found anywhere.

A look out of the window showed that it had started to rain as well. Perhaps he should wait for a while? Of course, not because he wanted to avoid another possible confrontation with Hermione if she decided to have take-away tonight too, just because it was raining, and he didn't fancy going out in that.

Perfectly content with his sensible reasoning, he settled back on the sofa with a fresh cuppa, a packet of crisps and one of Hermione's mystery novels that had been lying on the table.

An hour later the doorbell rang.

Severus scowled. He wasn't in the mood for conversation with any of the Muggle neighbours. He had had enough talking for one day thank you very much. Clearly, it had been a mistake to cancel the Notice-me-not-charm on his house. At least Hermione had agreed to keep the wards those that were only borderline Dark at any rate to deter any uninvited Wizarding visitors.

The doorbell rang again.

Whoever it was could just go to hell.

The doorbell rang a third time. Apparently, they had other ideas.

With a huff Severus rose and marched to the front door. He opened it a crack to inform the uninvited visitors that they weren't welcome.

A hand appeared, waving a carrier bag like the proverbial white flag. Severus' gaze travelled up the arm to the face of a sheepish looking Hermione. She was holding two more bags in her other hand.

'I brought dinner,' she announced.

Without a word, Severus turned around and walked back inside, leaving the door open for Hermione to follow him.

They didn't speak as they set the dining table, but there were no hexes flying either, so this was definitely an improvement from their last conversation.

He went to fetch glasses from the kitchen. When he returned, Hermione had put the food on the table. There was an assortment of dumplings, crispy duck, sesame prawns, and steamed fish in black bean sauce as well as Chow Mein. The exact same dishes they'd had on that night almost six months ago.

He gazed at Hermione who was standing behind a chair, looking somewhat awkward. She opened her mouth, then closed it again.

Then she said, 'I'm sorry. I shouldn't have blown up your vials.'

'The potions took ages to brew.'

Before Hermione could say anything more, he quickly added, 'I'm sorry, too. The Medusa comment was uncalled for.'

They kept looking at each other across the room for what seemed like an eternity. Until--

Until Severus' stomach gave an audible growl when the scents of garlic, soy sauce and other spices wafted into his nose. A corner of Hermione's mouth started to twitch. 'Dinner?'

'Dinner,' Severus agreed.

They ate in comfortable silence only interrupted by the occasional request to pass one of the dishes or a remark as to the very satisfactory quality of their meal. At some

point, Severus Accioed a bottle of wine to go with their food.

Putting her chopsticks aside, Hermione asked, 'Only the Medusa comment?' But she was smiling.

Severus raised an eyebrow. 'Pot, kettle.'

After they cleared the table, they retired to the sofa with the rest of their wine. 'I've been thinking...' Hermione began.

'Oh?'

Which earned him an elbow into his side, but it was a very gentle elbow.

'Maybe we should find a free elf to come in once a week and do the cleaning,' Hermione continued, 'and tidy up a bit.'

Severus nodded. 'We both earn enough to afford this. Nobody touches my lab, though.'

'The lab is all yours, then.' Hermione snuggled into his side.

He put an arm around her, pulling her closer, glad that things were back to normal.

~fin~