

Life in a Day

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Sometimes a veritable treasure can be found in an unexpected place.

One

Chapter 1 of 1

Sometimes a veritable treasure can be found in an unexpected place.

Hermione straightened and winced at the pain in her lower back before she blew a strand of her unruly hair out of her face. As usual her plait had unraveled over the course of the day. Surveying the small room, she made sure that everything was packed. Only bare walls and empty shelves were left, plus several boxes, neatly divided into two piles. The bigger ones would go to their new home, the smaller ones would be disposed of.

Carefully navigating around the two stacks, she made her way back into the potions classroom. It, too, was empty not even a single chair was left.

'I'm done here,' she called out into the corridor. "Want me to bring the boxes out?"

'Not yet.' Poppy's muffled voice came from the classroom on the other side, then the matron stuck her head round the door. 'Could you tackle one of the storerooms?' she added, a hopeful note in her voice. 'Either Neville or Severus should be along shortly to help you.'

Hermione sighed. 'OK. Just let me grab a bottle of water first.'

'Hang on.' Poppy's head disappeared, and almost immediately a bottle of water came gently floating in Hermione's direction.

She snatched it out of the air and emptied it in three large gulps before she made her way across the room to the two closed doors at the back of it. She briefly contemplated her choices and then went for the left door. Severus had dismantled the wards earlier, so it opened easily despite its little squeak of protest. Hermione was welcomed by a cloud of dust. She sneezed peering into the dim light..

'Oh, great, more boxes,' she muttered.

On the plus side there were no jars with dubious things in them at least none that were visible. The storeroom probably hadn't been large to begin with, but now almost every nook and cranny was crammed with cardboard boxes, two wooden trunks and some things Hermione couldn't quite make out in the dim light. When she cast a *Lumos* something quickly vanished behind one of the boxes. She stared after it for a bit before she decided not to investigate. Hopefully, it was just an ordinary spider and not something more sinister. Just in case, she added a protective spell to avoid any nasty surprises.

The additional light confirmed her initial impression: loads of cardboard boxes, two large wooden trunks plus a moth-eaten arm chair and a tailor's dummy. Hermione sighed again. 'I bet nobody's been in here for ages. And of course they knew about invisible extension charms.'

She shook her head. How had Sna...Severus managed to rope the whole Hogwarts staff into helping him clear out the potions classrooms plus the adjoining storerooms prior to renovation? Oh, right, they were all still feeling a bit guilty about the whole spy and leaving-the-former-headmaster-for dead thing. And of course, Sna...Severus knew exactly how to use this to his advantage. As far as she knew he mysteriously had managed to avoid having chaperone duty on any of the Hogsmeade weekends at least since she had come to teach at Hogwarts two years ago after having spent some years working at the Ministry. Not to mention that for some reason Severus' classes

never happened to be scheduled on Friday afternoons. And of course when he had mentioned that he had finally convinced the Ministry to allocate money for a refurbishment of the potions teaching facilities so all the old stuff had to be cleared out, they all had offered their help. What he had conveniently forgotten to mention beforehand was that most of it would have to be done without magic since some of the ingredients could be a little unpredictable.

At least nobody could accuse Severus Snape of being stupid, Hermione thought as she consulted the parchment with his instructions about what was to go where.

Too bad he had packed all the really interesting things earlier himself. She was still a bit peeved that he hadn't let her have a go at the library in his office.

'I want my books packed, I don't want to have to retrieve an errant charms teacher from them,' he had said.

'Why does everybody think I've got no restraint when it comes to libraries? I can focus.'

In response, Severus had raised an eyebrow and just said, 'Melk Monastery.'

'You have to admit that the conference in Vienna was deadly dull.'

'Yet you could have let me know that you didn't plan to Apparate back to the city for the leaving dinner.'

'That was last October. And you're *still* miffed? Because I found something better to do, or because I didn't tell you?'

'Hmph.' With that Severus had shoved the list of How To Sort His Things into her hands and stalked off to destinations unknown.

Hermione grinned as she remembered his expression; nobody could look as annoyed and sheepish at the same time as Severus. At least he wasn't boring. In fact he was rather interesting and charming in his own Snapely way.

Several boxes later, her opinion of her fellow teacher had slightly deteriorated, especially since neither he nor any other of her colleagues had yet materialised. She rifled through the umpteenth box and was ready to call it a day when she came across a small wooden case.

At first it wouldn't open. She tried the lid again; it continued resisting when suddenly she felt a little tingle creep up her hand and along her arm. It was almost like her magic was being tested. She nearly dropped the small box, but as quickly as the sensation had begun it was over.

Now finally able to open the small box, Hermione peered inside at a heap of what appeared to be all sorts of memorabilia and little trinkets. There was a pack of battered-looking Exploding Snap cards and a model toy car that looked fancy and old-fashioned like the cars she had seen in old films from the sixties, a slightly musty Slytherin scarf and a silver lighter that also looked like it belonged to another decade. Beneath those, Hermione found a yellowed postcard from Cleethorpes. Curious, she turned it around, but there was nothing written on the backside. Right at the bottom, there were two concert tickets for a Simple Minds concert in Manchester.

Hermione stared at the tickets. 1980. Two years after he had left Hogwarts, Snape had been supposedly in over his ears with Voldemort and hated all things Muggle; or had he already been a spy then? So why had he been to a Simple Minds concert back then? And why had he kept the tickets?

Hermione sat down on the dusty floor, her gaze returning to the tickets again and again whilst she kept turning the lighter around in her hand. 'I wonder what he was like then,' she said. In an instant the room started spinning around her and everything went dark.

♪ ♪ ♪

Slowly the world around her came into focus again, but her head hadn't got the message yet and insisted on feeling wobbly. Her tummy was decidedly unhappy, too. Hermione took a few deep breaths waiting for both the nausea and the dizziness to subside before she took a look at her surroundings. Her eyes widened. The dusty storeroom was gone. Instead she was sitting in a corridor of what appeared to be a small and fairly ordinary two-up two-down. Actually, "corridor" was a very generous description for what basically was a landing with three doors, all of which were currently closed. Music was blaring through the house. It sounded strangely familiar though she didn't recognise either the band or the song.

Hermione rose shakily to her feet, leaning against the wall for a moment. Her eyes nearly went out of focus again as she came nose to pattern with the ghastly wallpaper giant green loops on an orange-brownish background. Actually it might have been orange-yellow originally. Someone in this house was definitely a 70s fan. Hermione continued to steady herself against the wall whilst she tried to figure out what had just happened.

Perhaps an old Portkey Severus had forgotten? Though usually Portkey travel didn't make her quite this dizzy. Still, it seemed the most viable explanation. She tried to stand on her own and quickly leant against the wall again when everything started spinning once more. She forced herself to take several deep breaths before she tried again. Much better.

She took another deep breath for good measure and then focused on the problem at hand. Going with the assumption that the lighter had indeed been a Portkey where was she? Whose house was this? Rather than trying any of the closed doors, she decided to investigate the source of the music, which sounded like something from around the early 80s. Something vaguely new wave-ish and a lead singer with a very nice voice.

Hermione briefly contemplated keeping her wand out, but then she might be among Muggles, and they tended to look a bit askance at people dressed in robes with wooden sticks in their hands. Though finding a stranger in their house would probably get her a look or two anyway. Fortunately, she was wearing jeans and a jumper, so she slipped her wand up her sleeve, making sure she'd be able to get it in a heartbeat, then tiptoed down the narrow staircase only to freeze in her tracks halfway down.

The door to the living room stood open, affording her a good view of the man lying on the sofa, his eyes closed, a lit cigarette in his hand, nodding in tune to the song coming from the record player. Hermione wrinkled her nose at the offensive smell whilst she stared at him for a minute or two before she very quickly and quietly retreated back upstairs.

She sat down on the top step to contemplate what she'd just seen. The man on the sofa looked exactly like Severus Snape. She hadn't seen his eyes, but she'd recognise his hair and his face with the prominent nose anywhere.

Only he didn't. The man on the sofa was younger, considerably younger than Severus. From the brief glance she'd guess about twenty years, give or take a few. It was hard to tell. So either Severus had a hitherto hidden relative or...

There was no "or" really. It was the only logical explanation. Hermione's eyes fell on the wallpaper again. And the music came from a record player. Unless...

No, this was too ridiculous to even contemplate. How could this even be possible? A Portkey *and* a time-turner? She'd never heard or read of any such thing. Who would be able to create something so complicated? And for what purpose?

She was so lost in her musings that she didn't notice the shadow looming over her until well she noticed the shadow looming over her. She looked up into a pair of very annoyed dark eyes.

'Who are you? And how did you get here?'

Any doubt vanished. Vintage Snape, though apparently a younger and much more volatile version. Plus he sounded different, much less refined, more... Northern, more working class than she'd ever heard him. 'I...'

'Another one of Lucius' little presents, are you?'

'I...'

'Thinks it's funny, does he?'

'I...'

'Sending me one of his little tarts.'

Hermione bristled. 'Excuse me?' she said, her voice having the warmth of a very cold winter's day.

Now there was the end of a wand digging into her throat. 'Who are you, then? I'm waiting.'

Very calmly and slowly. Hermione raised her hand, curled her fingers around the end of Snape's wand and moved it a few inches away. 'If you would stop yelling for a minute, I could actually answer your questions.'

Snape looked mutinous but nodded for her to continue.

Again very slowly, Hermione stood up, so that she could look Snape in the eye. 'I'm...'

His wand hand was twitching.

'...Jean. My name is Jean. And "Lucius" didn't send me.'

'How did you get here, then?'

'It's complicated.'

There was a noise that sounded suspiciously like a snort before he said, 'Downstairs.'

'After you.'

'What? Do you think I'm stupid?'

Several replies came to mind, none of which would improve the situation in which she found herself, so Hermione simply looked at him meeting his gaze.

Their staring contest seemed to last an eternity until Hermione made a decision.

'Fine,' she said, starting to walk downstairs, hoping she'd be quick enough to cast a wandless *Protego* if Snape was up to something.

They arrived at the bottom of the stairs without incident. Snape pointed to a door on the right. Hopefully that wasn't the way to his cellar-turned-into-a-dungeon. As it turned out, the door led into the kitchen that was as small and worn as the rest of the house, but like the rooms Hermione had seen so far, it was neat and meticulously clean. At some point Snape had turned off the music, making the silence between them palpable. He indicated one of the mismatched kitchen chairs. 'Sit.'

He remained standing, leaning against the counter, his arms crossed.

Hermione looked him over. He seemed to be in his early twenties, his hair was longer than she'd seen it in all his Hogwarts years, but he was just as pale as he'd always been, though obviously there were fewer lines in his face. His posture was tense, almost rigid. His figure was very slim, almost lean, clearly visible beneath his black jeans and black t-shirt. Again, Hermione did a mental double take. The big bad Death Eater in Muggle jeans? Something didn't add up here.

If he noticed her scrutiny, he didn't show it.

'Still waiting.'

Hermione sighed. How could she explain something she didn't really understand herself. 'What year is this?'

'What? Did you hit your head on your way in?'

'Could you just tell me, please?'

A wave of his finger indicated a Muggle wall calendar. Hermione's eyes briefly stopped on the sports car depicted on it, before she saw the month.

October.

1980.

Another wave of dizziness hit her. She had to swallow several times before she managed to say, 'I'm not from... around here.'

'I know. You sound too posh.'

She glanced at the calendar again. 'It's complicated.'

'So you said. I suggest you start, I haven't got all day.'

Hermione thought he'd start to tap his foot any second now. Or hex her after all. Which he might anyway, once she told him the truth. 'I think I travelled back in time.'

Snape gave a mirthless laugh. 'I think you've been watching too much telly. Time travel isn't possible.'

'That's not true. It is, but you can only go back a couple of hours. And only if...'. She stopped not sure how to continue. She did some quick calculations in her head. Wasn't he supposed to still be a Death Eater at this point? How common was knowledge of time turners in this time? If she told him, would he use that info for something nefarious? Or worse: could it alter the future?

Snape's eyes narrowed. 'And only if what? A spell? A magical device?'

'How do you know I'm a witch?' Hermione asked and immediately wished she hadn't. But then, if he was still loyal to Voldemort, he wouldn't be happy to have a Muggle in his house. Come to think of it, best not to tell him she was Muggle-born.

'I'm clever.'

'Very funny.'

'Not really. Your magic is radiating off you in waves. But something is off.' His gaze became more intent.

Oh no, you don't. Grateful she'd learnt at least some basic Occlumency, Hermione closed her mind and thought as hard as she could of the table of contents of *One*

Thousand Magical Herbs and Fungi. If he was only half as good as legend had it, she wouldn't last long, but at least she had to try.

To her surprise, he withdrew after only a superficial attempt.

'How dare you?' she hissed, standing up. 'I was going to tell you. Try something like this one more time and you'll find out exactly how powerful I am.'

Faced with her fury, Snape shuffled a bit further along the counter, away from her and held up a placating hand. 'All right, don't get your knickers in a twist.'

Hermione contemplated again how much or how little to tell him before she settled on a heavily edited version. 'I was helping to clear out y... a friend's... attic. I found an old lighter in a box, started to play around with it and next thing I knew everything started spinning, and I found myself in your house.'

'You don't seriously expect me to believe that.' Despite his words, Snape sounded intrigued.

'It's the truth.'

Snape huffed. 'That 's a big word. Do you have any proof for your story?'

Hermione dug around in her trouser pocket until she found the spare change she'd hoped would be there and handed Snape a Knut. 'Look at the year it was minted.'

His eyes widened. '1990.' He came over to the table and sat down across from her. 'So you *are* from the future.'

'Yes.'

'Tell me...'

Hermione interrupted him. 'No. Much as I would like, I can't. I don't want to be responsible for altering the future.'

'Not much of a future anyway. Is there?'

'Nice try.'

Snape seemed to give up for now. 'Fancy a cuppa?' he offered.

'That would be nice. With a splash of milk if you have any.'

Snape nodded and got up to busy himself with making tea, every now and then casting a surreptitious glance in her direction.

A short while later he set down a chipped mug in front of her. Hermione took a sip. The warm soothing liquid running down her throat seemed to be the first reassuring thing in all this mess. 'The worst thing is, I have no idea how to get back to my own time.'

'When is your time? The 90s?'

Again, Hermione considered what she could tell him. But then, she needed his help. Plus she could always Obliviate him at some point. '2003.'

'That is a long time away.'

'I know. So will you help me?'

Snape seemed to consider her request for quite a while before he nodded. 'We can start by looking through my books. I've a couple of... rarer volumes that might help.'

♪ ♪ ♪

'So what exactly are we looking for?' Severus asked once they had moved into the living room. 'Something to do with time turners?'

Hermione didn't answer right away as she was too busy examining his overflowing bookshelves. Even younger Snape had a very impressive collection of magical books. She moved slowly along the rows of books examining the titles. Her fingers were itching with the desire to pull out several of the volumes to peruse them more closely.

'Hello? This is not a public library.'

'Sorry. You have an impressive collection.'

'Yes. Thank you. If we could come back to my question.'

Was that hint of pink on his pale cheeks? Hermione almost smiled, but instead she said, 'Erm, what was the question again?'

'What are we looking for? Modified time turners?' The annoyed look Snape cast in her direction reminded her so much of his older self that she felt a little pang inside.

So he was aware of the existence of time turners. Good. 'Possibly. Or modified Portkeys. Or something else entirely. I don't know.'

'Hm.' Snape now turned to the bookshelves as well; Moving slowly along them, he chose several books until a substantial stack floated behind him. With a wave of this wand he directed them to the small table in front of the sofa. 'Then we best get started.'

Hermione had no idea how much time had passed when a jingling noise broke her focus on the book about Portkeys she was looking through. Her head snapped up to see Snape spring to his feet. He frowned. 'I have to go somewhere. It won't take long. Will you be all right here?'

She nodded. 'I'll just continue looking through the books.'

'Back in a bit.'

It didn't escape her notice that Snape's wand quickly cast a few spells. She saw the faint glimmer of wards going up around the staircase and one of the bookshelves. Apparently, he didn't want her snooping around. Fair enough since it was his house. And as curious as she was about this younger version of Severus her priority was to get home. Back to her own time. *And her own Severus*, a little voice whispered in her head. She paused at that thought. He wasn't hers. Did she want him to be? A very pleasant little tingle accompanied that question. She filed it away for further reference and pulled the next book towards her.

When she looked up again it was dark outside. There was no sign of Snape and she wasn't any nearer to finding out how she had ended up here. And suddenly there was a pang of longing so acute it seemed to tear her heart apart. Yes, this Snape was undoubtedly - Snape, but he wasn't *her* Snape. Severus. She missed the older version of him who was a little less volatile and a lot more sarcastic. She missed him teasing her about her tendency to get lost in research and books and he'd know since he was just the same as the many nights they had spent together working on some project or other proved. She missed the crinkles at his eyes and his rare smile. And just like that it struck her that he was the most important person in the universe no in all the universes, to her. She had to find a way back since it seemed imperative to tell him. How had she never realised that he meant the world to her?

Hermione stretched to work the kinks out of her neck before she focused on the book in front of her again.

She wasn't aware how much time had passed when she heard the front door opening and soon Snape stuck his head round the door, waving two carrier bags in her direction.

'I brought dinner if you want,' he said before he disappeared into the kitchen.

'Dinner would be lovely. Thank you.' Her statement was accompanied by an audible growl from her stomach.

Soon they had plates filled with fish, chips, and mushy peas in front of them.

'Oh, I haven't had mushy peas in ages,' Hermione exclaimed.

Snape frowned. 'They don't have mushy peas in your time?'

'They're less... colourful.'

'I see,' he said, though very clearly he didn't.

It seemed that they mutually agreed not to discuss Hermione's predicament over dinner. Instead they ate in almost companionable silence after a few attempts at conversation on her part were impeded by Snape's monosyllabic answers. Hermione offered to do the dishes afterwards, resulting in Snape frowning at her.

'Are you Muggle-born?'

Still not sure if she could trust this Snape, Hermione quickly lied, 'No. just not very good with household charms.'

He didn't look entirely convinced but, apparently, decided to let the matter drop and simply waved his wand in the general direction of their plates, which floated obediently into the sink.

Back in the living room, Snape produced a small box from his pocket. Placing it on the couch table, he pointed his wand at it to enlarge it. It contained a stack of books. 'I borrowed these from a friend,' he explained. 'They might help.'

Hermione was about to reach for one of the books when she recognised the Malfoy crest on it. Withdrawing her hand as nonchalantly as possible she asked, 'Are they warded?'

Snape shook his head. 'Not anymore. They should be safe to handle for everyone.'

She noticed the "should" but took the book anyway and started to leaf through it. Her eyes widened. 'I had no idea there were so many ways to manipulate time.'

Snape gave a non-committal grunt whilst picking up another of the books.

"Her" Snape would have discussed the possibilities, Hermione thought, completely missing the intense look this Snape gave her as she continued reading about conflicting theories of wizarding time travel.

As she continued reading there was something niggling at the back of her head. She went back to the previous chapter. There it was. She read the paragraph in question again and then a third time, though the words kept blurring in front of her eyes.

♪ ♪ ♪

Hermione turned with a contented sigh, attempting to snuggle deeper into her pillow. Instead she found herself suddenly on a very hard floor. 'Ow.'

Her eyes flew open. Definitely not her bedroom. She'd been sleeping on a sofa, which wasn't hers. It took her brain a while to catch up before she remembered.

Right, 1980. Snape's house. Trying to get back to her own time. She seemed to have fallen asleep on the sofa whilst going through the books Snape had brought with him from Malfoy Manor.

She slowly got up and smiled when she saw the blanket with which Snape had apparently covered her. Hermione quickly tiptoed upstairs to the bathroom to take care of the necessities. A quick wash courtesy of three bits of toilet paper transfigured into washcloth, towel and toothbrush - and a couple of cleaning and grooming charms later, and she felt as good as new. Hermione ventured into the kitchen and made herself tea. When Snape came downstairs a bit later he raised an eyebrow.

'I see you've made yourself at home.' His tone was neutral but not unfriendly.

'Sorry, I was thirsty.' Hermione pushed another mug towards him.

He took a sip, then made some toast and put a tub of margarine and a glass of strawberry jam on the table. A plate landed in front of Hermione as Snape took the seat opposite her. They ate in silence until Hermione remembered something she had meant to ask him. 'What was the music you were listening to yesterday? You know when I... arrived?'

Snape looked a little surprised. 'A Scottish band. Relatively new. You probably won't know them. They're called Simple Minds.'

'Actually, I do. They're good, though I've never heard their early stuff.'

'Would you like to?'

Snape looked a little quizzical at her mentioning "their early stuff", so before he could pursue the topic further, Hermione quickly answered, 'Yes.'

They retired to the living room where Snape busied himself with selecting and putting on a record. 'This is from their first album.'

The premonitions came true/Look all around and you'll see.

He played her some of this favourite songs and then some from the latest album.

Hermione found that, though they sounded a bit different in this time, she did indeed like their early songs. The other thing she really came to like was watching Snape getting lost in the music. He looked different, more relaxed, less on guard. Somehow it was very hard to reconcile this jeans and t-shirt wearing, Muggle music loving man with the Death Eater he was still supposed to be at this point in time. Or was he? When exactly did he change sides and become a spy? She watched him lying there, his eyes closed, nodding in tune to the song. What would "her" Snape Severus look like in jeans? Did he still look that fit underneath his robes?

-The human drum/beats a rhythm of life

'Hello? Earth to Jean?'

Hermione snapped out of her reverie and realised that Snape had noticed her noticing him. 'Wh? Oh. Sorry, got lost in the music,' she mumbled.

'I said, I was going to see them play in Manchester tonight. You could come, too if you want to.' He hesitated. 'That is if you're still here.'

Hermione's eyes crept towards the pile of books on the couch table. 'That would be nice.'

Somehow the mood was broken now. In unspoken agreement they both grabbed a book and continued to look for a solution to Hermione's predicament.

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Hermione yawned as she took yet another book from the pile. Occasionally one of them would wander into the kitchen and provide fresh tea. It felt like they had been at it for days and still nothing. No spell, not even a hint of anything. What would she do if she couldn't find a way back? Would Snape agree to let her sleep on his sofa until she could find a job and a place to live? She sighed and tried to focus on the page in front of her when she realised that she had already looked through this book last night. And there was the giggling at the back of her head again. She reread the paragraph.

'I think I've got something. Here's a paragraph that refers to multidimensional Portkeys.'

'Show me.' Snape wandered over and sat on the armrest of the sofa next to her.

She pointed out the passage in question.

'You're right. This could be it.'

They looked at each other, smiling. Though Hermione noticed that Snape's smile seemed to be tinged with a little sadness.

'Too bad they aren't more specific about the spells needed to make such a Portkey,' she said. 'I mean *Portus* would obviously be a part of it, but then?'

Snape nodded, staring at his bookshelves. Then he suddenly got up and dashed to the far corner of the room. He pointed his wand at the top shelf of the bookcase and from behind the row of books, a small, ancient and battered-looking volume floated down into his outstretched hand. He leafed through it until he had found the page he'd apparently been looking for.

Coming back to the sofa, he showed Hermione the page. 'Here.'

She looked at words in a language she'd never seen before. 'Sorry, I can't read this. I don't even know which language this is.'

'It's a transcript from Etruscan tablets.'

'You speak Etruscan?'

'I can read it. Some ancient potion recipes are written in that language.' He looked a little smug.

'So what does it say?'

Snape looked at the page again. 'It's actually a series of spells. First you make a Portkey and then you add the temporal layers. It's a little tricky as both the wand movements and the wording have to be very precise or...'

'Or what?'

'Or you could end up some place you didn't plan to go.'

'Timewise?'

'Yes.'

Hermione imagined ending up in the middle of a battle, or right at Voldemort's or Grindelwald's feet. Perhaps it wouldn't be so bad to stay in the 1980s? Then she thought what it would be like never to see Severus her Severus again. 'I have to try. I have to go back.'

'All right.' Again the slightly sad look. 'So first we make an ordinary Portkey.'

'Can we use the mug?' Hermione asked, pointing to the one she'd been drinking from since yesterday. 'I've become sort of fond of it.'

'Of course.'

She thought of the Hogwarts storeroom where her journey had begun before she pointed her wand at the mug. *Portus*.

It glowed blue and shook a little before it returned to looking just as before.

'And now we have to add the temporal layers,' Snape said. 'First the year, then the month, the day and finally the hour. There is a spell for each component.'

He showed her the page again. At least the spells were in Latin, so that Hermione could make some sense of them. Snape described the wand movements she would need. She closed her eyes as she memorised them and then practised them a few times without saying the words following Snape's directions until he was satisfied with her wand waving.

'Ready?'

'As ready as I'll ever be.' Hermione took a deep breath and then began the incantations. As she proceeded the mug first glowed red, then green, then yellow and finally purple, spinning around its axis a couple of times before it sat still again.

'How is it activated?'

'Unless you key it to someone else's magic only you can do it. You twirl it in your hands and ask a question about something or someone where you want to go.'

Hermione's eyes widened as she realised how she had activated the first Portkey, but she decided not to mention this to Snape. 'So that's it, then.'

He nodded, looking a little sad again. Hermione suddenly didn't feel the need to leave right away. 'Can I still come?'

'Sorry?'

'The concert. You said I could come if I'm still here. I'd very much like to go.'

Now there was a smile an actual smile on Snape's face. 'Of course you can.'

♪ ♪ ♪

An hour later, they materialised in a dark side street in Manchester. From there they made their way to the city centre. Hermione wasn't entirely sure their tickets were genuine, but who was she to quarrel? She was off to a concert with, now that she was ready to admit it, a rather dishy in his own way man and it all felt like just the kind of

adventure she liked. Not to mention that actually seeing history gave her quite a kick too. Plus, Snape now appeared almost mellow. It seemed like the younger version had come to like having her around. If only that were true for the older version as well. To her relief, their tickets were accepted without question and soon they were inside the club.

'Front?' Severus asked.

'Definitely,' she replied.

And then the band walked onto the stage, the first notes were struck and Hermione was lost to the moment and to the music.

Today I saw a film going backwards/Thirty frames a second/Was a man I recognised.

At some point, swinging to the music, she looked at Snape and he looked back at her and in his eyes she recognised the man she knew. On impulse she reached for him and kissed him.

Afterwards after the music and after the kiss there was awkwardness.

They were standing in the back alley again.

'You're still leaving.'

It wasn't a question.

'Yes. I don't belong here.' Hermione heard the words coming out of her mouth and they had sounded so much less hurtful in her head.

'Will I ever see you again?' Bland. No emotion in his voice.

'Yes. You will.' Careful. Not saying too much.

He pressed his lips to hers one last time.

She whispered the question to activate the Portkey still feeling his lips on hers...

♪ ♪ ♪

...and tumbled into the present right at Severus' feet.

'Hi,' she said before she hugged him like her life depended on it.

And Severus? He simply hugged her back.

'Finally,' he mumbled into her hair.

When they disentangled, she gazed at his face. Older than she had last seen him, but so much more familiar. Her Severus. Definitely.

'You knew.'

'Yes. It feels like I've always known, though I didn't. Does that make sense?'

'No. And yes. You know now because you knew before, even though you didn't. The logics of time travel I suppose.'

And she kissed him and he kissed her back. Again and for the first time and it felt exactly right.

♪ Fin ♪

A/N:

Many thanks to Gelsey for the beta

Originally written as a gift for ms_anthrop in the sshg_gifffest 2017 on livejournal.

The Potterverse belongs to JKR, I only take out the characters to play. All song quotes are from Simple Minds' songs no copyright infringement intended and no money is being made in either case.

The Simple Minds concert Hermione and Severus attend actually took place on 26 October 1980 at the Rotters in Manchester.