

Living Arrangements

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Chapter 1: Arriving

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Hermione had, for many years, looked up to Professor Snape with respect and fear. Respect because he was a great wizard, and not just in his teaching field, and feared him because he was almost a foot taller than her, had an unfriendly aura about him, and was once a Death Eater. She was struck dumb for a moment when the Headmistress had told her to hide at Professor Snape's house for her own protection against renegade Death Eaters who escaped from capture and death in the final showdown.

It was apparent after the final showdown on Hogwarts grounds that Professor Snape had died, but, for whatever reason, he wasn't cremated and had a similar burial to that of the previous Headmaster, Albus Dumbledore. Mostly everyone had accepted this "burial" as a show of respect; all information of Severus Snape past had come to light, so everybody now knew that Snape was a double agent and totally loyal to Dumbledore. Hermione, however, suspected better. She had read that when respected wizards die the wizarding community have a ceremonial cremation in the outdoors, where the ashes of the deceased can become one with the atmosphere and the Earth. But no one else seemed to notice; apparently, it was an old fashioned ceremony that just wasn't done anymore, much like the Tri-Wizard Tournament.

Hermione complied with her McGonagall's wishes and moved into Snape's' house. Hermione was surprised to find that Spinner's End was located in a run-down industrial neighbourhood and had a rural forest across from it. The house now had a Secret Keeper, Hermione did not know who it was and only a handful of people knew where it was now. When Hermione opened the front door to her new home it was dark, dusty and terribly musty smelling. Hermione was confined to the house the entire summer until things died down a little and she could return to Hogwarts to officially complete her schooling. The fact was Hermione was more than capable to teach, rather than be taught. She knew most of the content already, in theory. Similarly to Hermione, Ron and Harry were in Secret Kept houses, some distance away from each other so it was less likely they were all found if there was an information leak. Harry was in Grimmauld Place, whereas Ron was somewhere in the west of Great Britain.

Upon setting foot in this old house where Snape grew up, Hermione became set on the idea that while she was living in this place, she would clean it up to suit her style and needs. Everything in this house was dark, and dingy, even with the lights turned on. When the lights were off the front room seems crowded and small for its size, when she turned the light on, the realisation was made that the walls were lined with bookcases, filled with books, not overflowing, but no spare room for more. There were books as end tables at the ends of the two-seater sofa. Hermione explored the ground floor, this first front room would be a living room, and it would need a television and a coffee table, perhaps some extra lamps, nice curtains. The next room was what would be a dining room, more bookcases on the walls, and a small kitchen with faded and peeling yellow paint and out-dated bench tops, very few appliances, few cups/mugs/plates, the fridge is small and old and probably didn't work anymore.

Hermione continued this mental list of want she could transfigure and what needed to be bought to make these living arrangements more comfortable and inviting. Turning around Hermione headed for the stairs and noticed a toilet under them with an outdated design. Hermione ventured upstairs with trepidation, thoughts of old greying clothing and bedclothes. What secrets would be found here? As she arrived on the landing wand at the ready for any guarding spells that the Aurors may have missed. Upon request, Hermione asked that they do not discard Snape's clothing and that she would deal with it. When Hermione looked down the hallway now ahead of her she was surprised that there was an attempt up here to make it seem friendlier and family orientated. Although, the pale peachy-pink coloured walls looked faded and cracked

in some places, with spider webs in the cornices.

There was an overall greyness of this house which Hermione noted; she will have to paint and dust to give this house vibrancy. There were no floor-to-ceiling bookcases on this second floor. Perhaps one of the spare bedrooms will be covered, all four walls, with these bookcases. Hermione entered the first room on the left-hand side; it was a bathroom of moderate size, a bath, curtain and shower-head, mirror, cabinet with cupboards, a toilet. Slightly mouldy and dusty from not being used in a while, just a good clean would do wonders. This bathroom leads into the master bedroom. The master bedroom is plain. There's a queen sized bed, with an old wooden bedside table on both sides, and a matching bureau in the corner. Everything is covered in dust. Hermione casts a quick cleansing spell and strips off the bedding to banish any dust mites that might still be kicking around, seeing as she had to sleep in this room. She carried the sheets to the door which lead back into the hallway and put them on the floor for now until she had finished exploring. The next door on the right was a linen cupboard with stale and yellowed bed sheets and towels. She closed the doors, making a note to attack this mess in the future. Down the hall, a little further were two doors opposite each other. The one on the right is another bedroom which had an old metal frame single bed, a table and a wardrobe. The room on the left is a study. There are more bookshelves in here, a large sturdy wooden desk with a lamp. The drawers have writing tools and yellowed important documents in them.

It was clear to Hermione that this entire house needed to be redecorated. The second bedroom would make a good guest bedroom. The paperwork from the previous owner would be put in storage containers and put in the attic. Hermione noticed a hutch when she left the study to retrieve the bedsheets. She shuddered to think what would be up there. The Auror on duty today to check up on her would be arriving soon. They had given Hermione some privacy while she checked out the house on her own and to put her own things away. Hermione put the sheets in the laundry which was between the kitchen and the door to the backyard. There was a basin, cupboards and 30-year-old washing machine that looked like it hadn't been used for a long time. Frustrated, Hermione threw the sheets in the basin and went in the kitchen, where she Accio'd parchment and a muggle pen. She wrote a list of things she will need to make this place liveable such as a washing machine, kettle, etc, but also for linens, bedsheets and towels.

There was a series of rhythmic knocks at the front door. Hermione walked through the house and answered it.

"Miss Granger, did you check who it was at the door? I know the Chief told you how to cast it. I might be a Death Eater after you."

"Good morning to you too, Mr Hawke. Please come inside."

Malcolm Hawke was a low ranking Auror who did not fight at the Battle of Hogwarts which was just over a month ago as he was collecting intelligence aboard. He was about forty years old and spoke in a harsh manner that was not without warmth. His facial features were of an average man, with medium brown and eyes the colour of dark chocolate.

"I was hoping," Hermione started, jogging back to the table in the kitchen to grab her comprehensive list, "that I could go out and buy all these items? Kingsley said that the Ministry would pay for anything I needed to live in this house. It is a wreck, Mr Hawke. I need these things." She pushed the list into his chest while she was talking and he read it over.

"Sure, it shouldn't be a problem. The Chief gave you money, we need to stop by Gringott's to change it over for the muggle items on the list."

"Ok then, lets head out. "