

New Beginnings

by nogod1215

After nearly being killed by her husband, Hermione returns to Hogwarts. (Ultimately a SS/HG, but starts out a little different.)**NOW COMPLETE**

Chapter 1

Chapter 1 of 17

After nearly being killed by her husband, Hermione returns to Hogwarts. (Ultimately a SS/HG, but starts out a little different.)**NOW COMPLETE**

DISCLAIMER::: Everything you recognize belongs to JKRowling and Warner Bros. I just love them so much I wanted to play with them a little.

Summary::: After nearly being killed by her husband, Hermione returns to Hogwarts. (Ultimately a SS/HG, but starts out a little different.)

New Beginnings

Chapter One

Draco rolled over and stretched his arm across the bed. The sheets were cold.

'Why are the sheets cold?' he thought.

Slowly he opened his eyes, searching for the familiar mass of dark hair that usually greeted him in the mornings. Coming to full realization that he was indeed alone in the large double bed, he sat up.

"Harry? Harry, where are you?" the blonde asked the empty room.

Rolling out of bed and grabbing the black satin robe he had been given at Christmas by his husband, he made his way toward the kitchen. Harry was sitting at the table, staring at a parchment that was unrolled in front of him. He looked up at Draco, a grave look on his usually happy face.

"What is it? What has happened?" asked the blonde, while thinking who knew what.

"He almost killed her... I can't believe it came to this! Bill went over there last night for dinner and found her bleeding on the kitchen floor. He was just sitting there... eating at the table as if nothing was amiss." Harry had started to cry, and Draco could tell all he really wanted to do was run from the house and Apparate to a small cottage in Hogsmeade to rain down his vengeance on Ronald Weasley.

"Slow down, my love! What do you mean he almost killed her? What was she doing back there? I thought she was still at St. Mungo's?" Draco was only mildly confused.

"He checked her out! Ron threatened the Healer and checked her out." Harry was now almost hysterical.

"Where is she now?" Draco asked, the panic for his friend starting to rise.

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"Any improvement?" he asked. Harry looked up at him and caught his eyes. The look of complete and total concern in them moved Harry.

Draco pulled out his wand, conjured another chair and sat down next to Harry. "Well, I have some good news! Ron has finally been arrested, and before you ask, no, I don't know where he's being held. They won't tell me for fear that I will tell you and you would kill him. This, of course, is a valid concern because I most certainly would. But what they don't realize is, you would have a hard time killing him because I would have already done so myself before telling you."

It seemed that the aftereffects of the war caused Ron to be removed from his place on the Cannons because he could barely sit on a broom without pain. Of course, the fact that Hermione had gone to work so they wouldn't have to borrow money from his parents made him take out his aggression on her. Hermione, always believing the best in people, had thought that all he needed was to get back to work, but after he was denied a modest position at the Ministry, he stopped trying all together and took to drinking. Soon his drinking was out of hand, and he and Hermione started fighting, which lead to him beating her almost daily.

"I don't know, but ever since the end of the war, the new Minister has not been kind to husbands who beat their wives. He will most likely be sent to Azkaban, or even exiled from the Wizarding World altogether," stated Draco.

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'It feels strange being back here,' Hermione thought.

"Well, hello there again, Hagrid," she said, smiling. It had been three years since she had last seen him because even when she lived in Hogsmeade, Ron rarely allowed her to go up to the castle, even to visit.

TBC

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Chapter 2 of 17

DISCLAIMER::: Everything you recognize belongs to JKRowling and Warner Bros. I just love them so much I wanted to play with them a little.

Summary:: Upon returning to Hogwarts Hermione is offered the Transfiguration position. (Ultimately a SS/HG)

New Beginnings

Chapter Two

Sitting in his usual dark corner of the staff room, it was not surprising that Professor Snape was unnoticed when the cloaked figure entered and headed for a table on the other side of the room. He watched with intent eyes to see who this intruder on his free period was. It could be said that he was very shocked when the figure removed the cloak to reveal a mass of frizzy hair that he realized could only belong to Mrs. Hermione Weasley. It still felt odd calling her this, even after eight years. Turning to sit in her chosen chair, Hermione looked up to see the unmistakable black eyes of her former Potions professor. She smiled but did not speak. When she purposely looked away, Severus had to wonder if she was still as scared of him as she had been in school, or if she was just nervous to be back here after all these years.

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"If you ever want to talk, you know where my office is."

With that said, he spun on his heel, his robes billowing around him as he walked away. Stunned, Hermione stared after him.

TBC

AN::: I would like to thank my betas Pixie and Allison. Without them you would never have gotten to see this. In the next chapter Hermione visits the kitchens and has a snack.

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Chapter 4

Chapter 4 of 17

After nearly being killed by her husband, Hermione returns to Hogwarts. (Ultimately a SS/HG, but starts out a little different.)**NOW COMPLETE**

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Summary::: Hermione gets some questions answered.

New Beginnings

Chapter Four

It was close to midnight, and Hermione was still sitting at the desk in her office marking essays, when a house-elf popped in and startled her. Deciding that it was time for her to head to bed, she stood and started for her private chambers. She had just approached the portrait to her rooms when her stomach growled loudly.

"You had better get down to the kitchens and take care of that, Professor, or none of us portraits will get any sleep tonight," the young lady in a white dress standing in a garden of yellow roses stated. This portrait had always been one of Hermione's favourites, and she used to converse with it often as a student.

"I think I will do that," Hermione agreed, turning around and heading down toward the kitchen.

When she entered the kitchen, all the house-elves inside started rushing around, piling her arms up with food. She tried to explain to them that she could never eat all this in a week, and all she wanted was a nice fresh salad.

From behind her came that now familiar voice, "Will you get the poor girl a salad, already?"

Turning around, she said, "Thank you, Professor, but I have everything under control."

He met her eyes for a second, and then, looking at the food in her arms, smirking, he met her eyes again.

"I can see that, Professor Granger. So what were you planning on doing with all that food in your arms? Or were you just holding it so they would have space on the counters to prepare your salad?" he drawled sarcastically.

Her eyes flashed with anger as she leaned over a nearby table and deposited her load of food. Ignoring his comment, she put her hands on her hips and asked, "Are you stalking me?"

Looking shocked for a moment, Professor Snape asked, "Stalking you? Why in the name of Merlin would/ be stalking *you*?"

Smiling, Hermione's eyes danced with mischief. "Every time I turn around, there you are, ready to throw a comment at me just to see if you can get a rise. Well, I hate to burst your bubble, *Professor*, but you don't scare me. You never did."

That being said, she turned around, took the salad she had requested from the elves, and walked over to a small table in the corner of the kitchen. Sitting down, she began to eat, completely ignoring the fact that Professor Snape asked for a piece of pie and, after receiving it, walked over and joined her.

They each ate in silence for awhile until Hermione's curiosity got the better of her, and she asked, "What kind of pie is that? It smells delicious."

Not looking up, Snape simply stated, "Peach."

Before she even had time to ask one of the elves for a piece of her own, one appeared on the table next to her salad. Grinning, she started in on it, too. They ate companionably until they were done. When a tea service appeared on the table between them, Professor Snape poured them each a cup and asked, "How has your first week of classes gone? I hope they have improved since Monday."

Hermione picked up her cup of tea and sipped it before responding, "The week did improve, thank you."

Then as if she just couldn't wait any longer to know, she asked, "How long have you been back at Hogwarts, Professor? The last I heard you were out of the country."

"I returned just last term. Yes, the last time I wrote to Draco, I was still in Tibet, so he would not have known I was back here. We don't keep in contact like we used to when we were first pardoned," he said, never looking up from his tea.

"How did Professor McGonagall get you back here? I thought the Ministry said you could never return to Hogwarts?"

"Oh, they did, but like Albus, Minerva can be very... convincing when she needs to be. She just frankly told the Minister that if he wanted her to stay on as Headmistress, he would have to give her free rein of the hiring and firing of professors just like Albus had had. Of course, he agreed, and she even talked him into signing a Wizarding contract attesting to it," he said, a small smile playing across his lips.

Shocked, Hermione said, "Who knew that the personification of Gryffindor could be so Slytherin." Then smirking, she added, "If she doesn't watch it, she just might turn into you."

Hermione giggled a little at the thought. Snape, on the other hand, laughed all out. He tilted his head back and simply laughed.

Not understanding this new side of Snape she had never before seen, she felt compelled to ask him about these changes.

"Who are you? If Harry ever saw you laugh like that, or even smile, he would die of shock on the spot, and then Draco would be forced to kill you out of revenge. I don't understand."

"Well, Professor Granger, as you know, I spent four years in the hills of Tibet after I was pardoned by the Ministry, when they discovered I was not really responsible for killing Albus. The poison he drank to get that fake Horcrux killed him the instant I cast the silent levitation charm on him to get him over the edge of the tower. It took some convincing and demonstrating that I could indeed perform a different spell silently than the spell I said out loud. Sometimes people just don't realize that it is the power of thought and feeling that is the strongest magic."

Sipping his tea again, he continued, "Anyway, while I was in Tibet, I lived with a group of Muggle Buddhists. They taught me about inner peace and forgiveness. They helped me to see that all the anger inside of me was toward a person that had only done to me what had been done to him, a person that had been dead for almost thirty years--my father. The Buddhists showed me how to move beyond the past and live for today. They believe that every day is precious, and that if you ignore the little things in life, then the big things don't matter as much."

Hermione was fascinated by listening to him talk about the Buddhist monks as if they had saved his life. And in a way, she guessed that they had. After the war had ended, everyone had tried to go on with his or her lives, and Snape had been stranded. He was a wanted man, so he couldn't go home. He had 'killed' Albus Dumbledore, so he couldn't go back to Hogwarts. He was no longer needed by the Order, and so he couldn't go to Grimmauld Place. He was stuck.

After the trial that freed him and Draco of all charges pertaining to the death of Dumbledore, Draco had been able to marry Harry, but Snape had no one. So he left the country. From what Draco had told them, Snape had travelled the world, spending very little time in any one place, but constantly moving. That is, until he had arrived in Tibet. All he would tell Draco in his letters was that he was alive and staying in the mountains. They had all pictured him living in a cave like the overgrown bat they had all considered him.

"It must have been difficult," she said finally.

"What was difficult?" he asked. "Do you mean the releasing of all the anger and hatred that I had carried all those years, or living as a Muggle for four years? In my opinion, the fact that I had to do chores without magic was the hardest part."

Picturing Snape on his hands and knees scrubbing floors made her chuckle, and Snape started to laugh too. Once they had settled down, the Potions professor set his teacup down and stood up.

"Well, Professor, it is late, and as we have a Hogsmeade trip to supervise tomorrow, I bid you good night." He bowed low, and then, looking up into her eyes, he smiled.

Smiling herself, she said, "Goodnight, Professor. Sweet dreams." Then she stood as well, and they walked out of the kitchens, going their separate ways toward their respective rooms.

TBC

AN::: I would like to thank my betas Pixie and Allison. Without them you would never have gotten to see this. In the next chapter Hermione visits Hogsmeade.

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Chapter 5

Chapter 5 of 17

After nearly being killed by her husband, Hermione returns to Hogwarts. (Ultimately a SS/HG, but starts out a little different.)**NOW COMPLETE**

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Summary::: While in Hogsmeade, Hermione remembers the night she almost died.

New Beginnings

Chapter Five

For being only the third week in January, the weather was surprisingly warm as Hermione made her way towards Hogsmeade. She was supervising the first trip since the students had returned for the term, and she was faintly aware that she had not even set foot in the town since that horrid day four months ago.

That day, the weather had been unseasonably cold for mid-September. She had just walked in the door of the tiny cottage she lived in, after spending the day shopping for their dinner with Bill that evening, when she felt a sharp pain in the back of her head. Dropping her groceries she grabbed her wand out of her back pocket, but her wrist was grabbed in an iron-tight grasp before she could level it on her attacker.

"I have told you countless times to NEVER point that thing at ME," growled the voice that made her cringe. "Now, you will have to be punished for disobeying me."

With that said, Ron backhanded her across the face hard enough to bring her to her knees. She tried to crawl away, but he grabbed her by her long hair, and dragged her across the room. She clutched at his hand and kicked her legs.

"Please, Ron! Don't do this! Not today! I have to cook dinner. Bill will be here tonight for dinner. You know he always comes on Saturdays," Hermione pleaded with her husband.

"Shut up, wench! You know fighting your punishment only makes it worse."

He was dragging her down the hall now. He stopped briefly to open the bedroom door, then pulled her inside. Bending low, he grabbed her by her shirt and pulled her to

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Chapter 6

Chapter 6 of 17

After nearly being killed by her husband, Hermione returns to Hogwarts. (Ultimately a SS/HG, but starts out a little different.)**NOW COMPLETE**

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Summary::: Hermione wakes up and has an encounter with a Weasley.

New Beginnings

Chapter Six

Slowly, Hermione came around. Her eyes fluttered as she opened them. She could make out blurry faces surrounding her, and then suddenly she remembered that she had fainted. Shooting upright, she felt a firm arm push her back down. Looking to her right, she saw Severus Snape kneeling beside her and gently holding her still.

"Calm down, Professor Granger. You are all right. Everything is fine," Snape said reassuringly.

"What happened?" she asked, knowing the answer but hoping she had not just seen a Weasley.

Glancing behind him, Professor Snape said, "It appears that you fainted after seeing Mr. Weasley back there."

"W... Weasley?" Shrinking back as if she was trying to push herself into the ground by her will alone, she asked, "Which one?"

"Bill, but that doesn't matter because he isn't supposed to be here. He isn't supposed to be anywhere around you. None of them are, correct?" Severus asked.

"That is correct, but what is he *doing* here? Why did he sneak up on me? What does he want?" Hermione asked, becoming frantic. She was breathing so fast, Severus feared she would hyperventilate.

"Calm down. You are just stressing yourself out. Come now, let's get you up." He placed an arm gently around her shoulders and lifted her to her feet.

Hermione looked over to where Bill Weasley was standing, surrounded by three Aurors. They had their wands pulled and aimed at the frustrated looking Weasley.

Meeting the Potions professor's eyes, Hermione asked again, "What is he *doing* here?"

"Mr. Weasley says that he came to Hogsmeade to finish clearing out the last of his brother's things from the house you two shared. He *said* that when he approached the house, he saw a figure standing outside the front gate. When he got close enough and saw that it was you, he said your name. When you didn't respond, he said your name again and you turned around. Then you fainted."

"Why would he want to talk to *me*? The whole family knows they aren't supposed to be around me." Hermione said, getting annoyed by the look Bill was giving her.

As Professor Snape led Hermione past the Aurors and Bill Weasley, Hermione looked up to him one more time.

'What does he want from me? He doesn't look like he wants to hurt me, she thought.

Just as they were passing him, she heard Bill say, "I just want to talk to her. I promise I won't do anything stupid. Please!"

Hermione stopped and turned slowly to look at him. Professor Snape put a protective arm out to her, and she looked up at him.

"It's all right, Professor, I just want to know what he has to say," she said, trying to calm him. Stepping up to the Aurors, she looked Bill in the eyes and asked, "What do you want to say to me?"

"I... I just wanted to make sure that you are all right." Bill said, becoming nervous. "Harry wouldn't tell me where you went when you got out of the hospital. Hell, Harry and Draco wouldn't even let me see you while you were still there. After you were released, the Ministry sealed your whereabouts. Since I wasn't allowed to see you after the trial, I just wanted to know that you were all right."

"As you can see, Mr. Weasley, I am just fine. No thanks to *you* or your *family*." At that, she spun around and started to walk away.

"I saved you, damn it! I *saved* you that night and helped the Aurors hunt down my own brother. I did all of that and you still think I am just like the ~~best~~ of my family?" Bill was all but screaming at her.

Hermione had stopped dead in her tracks. Tears were forming in her eyes, as she slowly turned around and looked up at him again. "You *saved* me? You dare to say you saved me? When you and the rest of your DAMN family saw the way he was? You all saw what he was doing to himself. After Harry and he had their falling out, because he just *couldn't get over* the fact that Harry is in love with Draco. You all saw it and you did nothing. He was drinking like a fish, and you just ignored it. You all just said it was the war. It wasn't the damn war, it was HIM."

Hermione was frantic. She was waving her arms around as she screamed at her ex-husband's eldest brother.

Snape had been standing by, saying nothing. Now, he reached out his arm and touched her shoulder. Hermione spun around, once again, and glared at him. He knew she wasn't mad at him, but the hatred and hurt he saw in her eyes stung just the same.

"Hermione, I... I'm sorry!" was all Bill said to her back.

Lifting her head up as high as she could, Hermione stalked off, back toward the castle.

'Let the other teachers deal with the students, she thought as she started to pick up speed, all but running back to the safety of her quarters.

TBC

AN::: Sorry it's so short. I just thought this was as good a place to stop as any. Once again I would like to thank my wonderful betas Pixie and Allison. In the next chapter Hermione has a visitor.

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Chapter 7 of 17

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Summary:: Hermione has a visitor.

New Beginnings

Chapter Seven

"Who is it?" she called out.

"Hermione, its Minerva. Could I come in, please," replied the Headmistress.

"Yes, of course," said Hermione, dropping the wards.

When the portrait opened, the Headmistress entered and was somewhat taken aback at the sight of Hermione's red-rimmed eyes and tear-streaked face.

"Oh, Minerva, it was awful! I was walking through Hogsmeade when the memory of the last time I was there came flooding back," Hermione sobbed.

Taking a deep breath, Hermione began again. "Well, as I said, I was remembering the night that Ron almost killed me."

"Is that when Miss Docker ran and got Severus?" asked Minerva.

"Oh, gods, there were several students there. I made such a spectacle of myself. What must they think of me?"

"That's just it, Minerva. I don't know if I am. I am so scared right now," Hermione said, taking her seat once again. "Seeing Bill today has brought up all the feelings I have been trying to push aside since I got out of the hospital. The whole family blames me for what happened to Ron. Molly even sent a letter begging me to tell the Ministry it was a misunderstanding. Can you believe it?"

"That is very nice of you to offer, but I can't ask the rest of the staff to take time out to sort through my mail. It just wouldn't be fair," Hermione said.

Outside the portal, she turned to the portrait and said, "It might be a good idea to allow senior staff members access to Hermione's quarters. Especially when she is as upset as she was today. Don't you think?"

"Yes, Headmistress," the lady in the portrait replied. Minerva nodded and headed back to her office; she had an owl she needed to send.

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Still straightening her desk, she called out, "Come in."

"Well, it looks like you are fitting right in here, Hermione," replied the voice of one of her best friends.

Looking up, she dropped the small stack of papers she was going to put away in a drawer and threw herself into the arms of Draco Malfoy-Potter.

"What can I do for you, Professor Granger?" he inquired. "I assume, from your expression, that this is not a social call."

Meeting his eyes, she said, "That is correct, Professor Snape. I came to see you because of something I overheard during my rounds this evening." Taking a deep breath she continued, "I believe that one of your Slytherins, Mr. Greyadder, is planning on acquiring his date for the ball in an unethical way."

Interested in anything concerning a member of his house, he asked, "And just how do you think he is going to do that, Professor Granger?"

"I believe, from what I have heard, that he is planning on giving a student, from a different house and a different year, a love potion."

"And what gave you that idea? Did he tell you this? Are you now an expert on love potions? Or are you just assuming that no Slytherin would be acceptable to a student from another house without resorting to such drastic measures?" Snape found himself becoming quite angry.

'How dare she accuse a student of MY house of plotting to dose another student!' he thought, fuming.

"Professor, I am sure that any of your precious Slytherins could talk a veela into dating them, if their heart so desired, but when I hear a seventh year student talking about getting more Ashwinder scales for his potion, then I have to wonder what he is doing. Furthermore, I become curious when I know that said Slytherin has asked the same fifth year Gryffindor, Miss Docker, to go with him to the ball no less than six times with the same negative answer each time."

"You mean to tell me that a Gryffindor turned down a Slytherin *six times*," Severus muttered with disbelief. "That is truly amazing."

"Amazing! What do you mean amazing?" Hermione huffed indignantly. "You think that no Gryffindor could resist a Slytherin's advances? That is just preposterous!"

"Will you go to the ball with me?" Severus asked.

"Yes, yes, of course," she said, still so outraged she didn't really hear his question.

"Excellent! I will be at your chamber door at seven," he said, smirking. He knew he had caught her off guard and was enjoying her reaction.

"Wait... what did you just say?"

"I said that I would be at your chamber door at seven. Are you losing your hearing, Professor Granger," he inquired politely. "Perhaps you should see Madame Pomfrey."

Hermione blinked before asking, "Be at my door for what exactly?"

"For the ball, you silly Gryffindor. I asked you to the ball, you accepted, so I will be at your chamber door at seven. Please do not make me repeat myself a fourth time."

With that he went back to the parchments he had been reading before she entered.

"Oh, umm... what do you plan to do about Mr. Greyadder?"

"I was already aware of his potion. I caught him just two hours ago trying to sneak into my private stores to steal the ingredient." Smirking he added, "He, unlike a Gryffindor I used to teach, is not very good about sneaking into places he is not allowed."

Hermione blushed. "You knew about that?"

"Of course I did. To whom do you think Madame Pomfrey came to find out when the Polyjuice was likely to wear off?"

"Why didn't I get detention for it?" she asked. She was certain she should have gotten detention for stealing from a Professor.

"I never reported the theft. I was too impressed that you had successfully brewed Polyjuice, and in your second year, no less. I couldn't tell Dumbledore about it, or Minerva would never have let me give you such bad grades in my class. Even if it was necessary for my cover."

"I see, well, I guess I can tell Miss Docker that Mr. Greyadder will not be asking her to the ball anymore. Thank you."

Hermione turned to exit the Potions professor's office. Just as she reached the door, she heard him say, "Seven o'clock sharp, Professor Granger. I will not be kept waiting."

Smiling, she exited the office, thinking, *'What ever shall I wear?'*

TBC

AN::: Once again I would like to thank my fabulous betas, Pixie, Allison and Piper. I would also like to thank everyone who has left a review. In the next chapter Hermione goes to the ball with Professor Snape.

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Chapter 9

Chapter 9 of 17

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Summary::: Professor Granger goes to the ball with Professor Snape.

New Beginnings

Chapter Nine

"Hermione, I will only be wearing black until they make something darker," Severus said wolfishly.

AN::: As always I would like to thank my fabulous betas, Pixie, Allison and Piper. I would also like to thank everyone who has left a review. They have really made me happy. And, of course, I would also like to thank Piper for the use of the line 'I am only wearing black until they make something darker.' In the next chapter Hermione has

lunch.

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AN3::: All of the student's names have meaning. I selected them specifically for those meanings. The only name not researched was Docker. I chose it to pay homage to a dear friend. She knows who she is. I just didn't want to use her first name, so I chose one that fit her last name. The names, origins, and meanings are as follows:

Berilo: (Spanish, Greek) means: "Pale green gemstone."

Llewellyn: (Welsh) means: "Like a lion."

Bazeel: (Greek) means: "royal, kingly."

Kallan: (Scandinavian) means: "flowing water."

Also, Mr. Greyadder's name, from previous chapters, was derived from 'silver snake.'

Chapter 10

Chapter 10 of 17

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Summary::: Hermione has lunch.

New Beginnings

Chapter Ten

Hermione sat up in bed and stretched, as memories of last night's ball brought a smile to her face. Climbing out of bed, she walked into the bathroom to get ready for her day. After a quick shower and twenty minutes wrestling with her tangled hair, she was just slipping her shoes on when she heard tapping at her window. She opened it to allow a large Barn owl into her rooms. The owl landed gracefully on the small nightstand beside her bed. Hermione eyed the bird with suspicion, but removed the roll of parchment from its leg anyway. When the bird did not take flight to leave, she assumed the letter required an immediate response, so she unrolled it and read.

Hermione,

Firstly, I would like to thank you again for a wonderful evening last night. Secondly, as something of an emergency has come up that will take me away from Hogwarts for most of the day, I am sorry to say that I must reschedule our lunch to dinner. If this is an inconvenience, please let me know. My owl will return your answer, to me, post haste. Would eight o'clock be acceptable to you? In my quarters as previously arranged.

Truly sorry,

Severus Snape

Potions Master

After reading the note, Hermione pulled a quill and parchment from the drawer of her nightstand and scribbled a quick note telling Severus that eight o'clock was fine, and that she hoped his emergency was nothing too severe. Tying the note to the owl's leg, she watched the owl take flight and disappear.

After closing the window, Hermione headed out of her rooms. Just as she was closing the portrait door, a hand touched her shoulder, and she jumped, spinning around, her wand in her hand.

"Whoa there, Hermione, it's just me," Harry said, his hands up in mock surrender. "No need to hex me, I mean no harm." There was a smile in his voice, even though his face was serious.

"Gods, Harry, you scared me to death. Do that again, and if I don't hex you into next week, Hogwarts will add another ghost to its residency," Hermione said, clutching a hand to her chest.

"I'm sorry. Draco suggested I come by to see if you wanted to have breakfast with us in our guest room. The Great Hall is very crowded, and we can talk more freely in private."

"Harry, that is a wonderful idea. It's Saturday, so I am not required to take my meals in the Hall. Let's go."

At this, Harry put his arm out, and she took hold of it as they made their way to the private guestroom that Minerva had provided him and Draco. Entering the room, Hermione was immediately picked up and spun around in the usual hug Draco liked to give her.

Laughing, Hermione protested, "Draco, I just saw you last night. Please, put me down."

Setting her on her feet, Draco replied, "I know, Hermione, but I don't get to see you very often, so when I do I have to make up for lost time."

"I understand, but spinning me around like that makes me feel like a little kid. I am a grown woman, Draco, and grown women do not get spun around in hugs," she said, half teasing him.

"Okay, Hermione. I will try to refrain from spinning you, but I will not give up the hugs."

TBC

AN2000: IF YOU, OR SOMEONE YOU KNOW ARE BEING ABUSED Physically,mentally, or emotionally you can call the National Domestic Violence Hotline at 1-800-799 SAFE (7233)

Chapter 11 of 17

DISCLAIMER::: Everything you recognize belongs to JK Rowling and Warner Bros. I just love them so much I wanted to play with them a little.

New Beginnings

As Hermione and Harry approached the gates to the castle, Hermione stopped, turned, and said, "Harry, there is no reason for you to see me all the way up to the castle, only to walk back down here again to Apparate home. It's getting late, and I know Draco will be worried if he gets home to find you still out. Why don't we just say our good-byes now, and you can pop right home?"

"I'll be fine. Once I cross the wards on the grounds, you know I will be perfectly safe," she replied. Then, hugging him, she said, "I had a wonderful afternoon. Now, off with you, I'll be fine," she repeated.

Harry hugged her back and gave her a chaste kiss on the cheek before stepping away and Apparating home. Hermione watched him go, then stepped toward the castle. Just before she crossed through the gates, she heard a rustling sound and paused, listening. Hearing the rustling sound again, she turned slowly toward the bushes to her left.

When she didn't receive a response, she waited, straining her ears for another sound. *I must be going crazy. Hearing strange sounds in perfectly ordinary bushes*, she thought, pocketing her wand.

Shaking her head ruefully, she turned and headed for the gates again, only to hear the noise once more. This time, she pulled her wand out and pointed it at the bushes as she slowly stepped forward, a curse ready on her lips. Just as she approached them, though, she jumped back, gasping as a small brown rabbit bounded across the path. Pulling her wand arm to her chest in shock, she chuckled at herself for being so paranoid.

Turning one more time to head home through the gates of Hogwarts, she screamed as strong arms grasped her painfully from behind. Struggling, she tried to aim her wand at her attacker, only to have it twisted out of her grasp. The last thing she heard as everything went black was a familiar voice whispering, "*Stupefy!*"

Hermione slowly came to. '*Damn, my head hurts,*' she thought groggily. Then, the memory of the attack came back to her. Sitting up quickly, she looked around. She couldn't see much in the dim light coming through the tiny window in the door at one end of the room. She could just make out the ratty mattress she was sitting on and a rusty bucket in one corner of the room. The walls, floor and ceiling seemed to be made of concrete, so she determined that the room she was in had been constructed using Muggle materials. Now, if only she could place that voice, and figure out how to get the hell out of this 'prison-cell' she found herself in.

It was nearly nine o'clock, and Severus Snape had been pacing in front of the door to his quarters for the past forty-five minutes. *'What is keeping Hermione?'* he thought.

He had been pleasantly surprised when she'd agreed to switch their meal from lunch to dinner. He didn't want to break the date altogether, but worried a bit whether changing it to dinner would rattle Hermione. Her note had sounded like she was fine with the new plan... but... could she have changed her mind?

As he was making yet another pass in front of his door, he heard his Floo activate, and stepped up to it to see the flames dancing about in a brilliant shade of green, with the Headmistress' head floating in the middle.

"Severus, have you seen Hermione? Her fifth year prefect has notified me that she hasn't been seen all day. Is she here with you?" Minerva inquired.

"No, Minerva, she is not here. She had agreed to have dinner with me, here, an hour ago, but never showed up." Starting to pace in front of the fire now, Severus began to run all kinds of horrible scenarios through his mind.

"You don't think something happened to her, do you?"

"I don't know, but I certainly intend to find out." With that, Severus straightened, and left his quarters. He needed to get outside the castle wards so he could Apparate. His first stop would be to the Potter-Malfoy residence, and, after that, the Ministry.

Hermione figured it must be about eight or nine o'clock. The sun had gone down hours ago, and her stomach had been growling for the last forty-five minutes. *I missed my dinner with Severus: he probably thinks I stood him up on purpose.* she thought.

Secretly agreeing, Severus had had enough. "Mr. Potter-Malfoy, stop your whining this instant!" he yelled, making the other men jump. "We have enough to worry about, without you having a breakdown."

"Harry, Severus is right. Freaking out right now is not going to help us find Hermione. You can't blame yourself for this. It won't help you think, and since you were the last to see her, that is exactly what I need you to do," Draco commented, trying to remain calm himself.

"Okay," Harry agreed, taking a deep breath. "I know you're right. I just wish I had followed my instincts and not left her alone."

After another frustrating hour of Draco questioning both Harry and Severus, they still had no idea what could have happened to Hermione. Draco was now in a meeting with several of his best Aurors, explaining the situation. Harry was sitting in a chair, wrapped up in his own misery, and Severus was pacing the office, trying to figure out what he should do next.

Suddenly, Draco rushed into his office and over to a cabinet in the corner. Pulling the second drawer open, he shuffled through some files and pulled out a parchment form.

"We have been permitted to use all our resources to find Hermione and return her to Hogwarts," he exclaimed, waving the form in the air. "The Minister himself has approved the mission and is having a team of highly skilled Aurors sent out to collect the Weasley family as we speak."

"You think the Weasleys kidnapped Hermione?" Harry choked. "But why would they do something like that?"

"After what Severus has told us about the encounter with Bill in Hogsmeade, and the letter he saw that Molly sent to Hermione, it has been decided they are the most likely suspects." Draco took a deep breath before continuing, "Also, Minerva has just informed us that the letter Severus saw was not the only one sent to Hermione. She has personally intercepted four other letters from Molly. Although no threats were issued in them, they were far from friendly and a violation of the Ministry's no contact order."

There was a knock at the door. A large, blonde Auror entered and said, "Sir, Misters William, Fred, George, and Charles Weasley are in room six waiting for you. We are still trying to locate Mr. and Mrs. Weasley. They are supposedly out of the country, and we are having trouble tracking them."

"Thank you, Auror Garvey, I will be right there," Draco replied. The Auror dipped his head and left the room, closing the door behind him. Turning to Harry and Severus, Draco asked, "So, do you two want to watch me do my job, or sit in here wondering what is transpiring out there?"

Severus said flatly, "I want to watch. Maybe I can glean something from their behavior to help you."

"I want to watch too. I want to watch them try to lie to you," Harry smiled grimly, standing up and moving toward the door.

"Let's go then," Draco smiled as well, leading them out of his office and into room five. There, he cast a monitoring spell on the wall connecting rooms five and six, and they could see the four Weasley sons. Bill was pacing the small room, irritation all over his face. Charlie was leaning against the wall opposite the spelled wall, his hands in his pockets, a confused and slightly frightened expression etching his features. The twins were slumped in two of the chairs provided, chatting away, their feet propped up on the small table.

"Well, here we go," Draco grimaced, exiting room five.

All four Weasleys looked up when the door opened, and in walked Draco Malfoy-Potter.

"What is the meaning of this? Why have you brought us here?" Bill demanded.

"Good evening, gentlemen," Draco said conversationally in response. "Let's all have a seat. I have some questions for you."

The five men sat down, the redheaded Weasleys on one side of the table, and Auror Malfoy-Potter on the other.

"Now that we are all comfortable, why don't you tell me which one of you kidnapped Hermione Granger?"

TBC

AN::: As always I would like to thank my fabulous betas, Allison and Piper. I would also like to thank all those who have reviewed. In the next chapter the interrogation continues.

AN2::: IF YOU, OR SOMEONE YOU KNOW ARE BEING ABUSED Physically,mentally, or emotionally you can call the National Domestic Violence Hotline at 1-800-799 SAFE (7233)

Chapter 13

Chapter 13 of 17

After nearly being killed by her husband, Hermione returns to Hogwarts. (Ultimately a SS/HG, but starts out a little different.)**NOW COMPLETE**

DISCLAIMER::: Everything you recognize belongs to JK Rowling and Warner Bros. I just love them so much I wanted to play with them a little.

Summary::: The interrogation continues.

New Beginnings

Chapter Thirteen

"What do you mean, 'which one of us kidnapped Hermione'?" Bill shouted, shooting to his feet.

Draco slowly stood and looked Bill squarely in the eyes, answering calmly, "Mr. Weasley, I suggest you sit back down. I would hate to have to hex you when I have more questions to ask."

Looking stunned and more than a little scared, Bill dropped back into his chair. The other three Weasley brothers held their tongues, but kept looking from Draco to Bill apprehensively.

"How long has she been missing?" asked one of the twins.

AN3:: IF YOU, OR SOMEONE YOU KNOW ARE BEING ABUSED Physically,mentally, or emotionally you can call the National Domestic Violence Hotline at 1-800-799-SAFE (7233)

Chapter 14

Chapter 14 of 17

After nearly being killed by her husband, Hermione returns to Hogwarts. (Ultimately a SS/HG, but starts out a little different.)**NOW COMPLETE**

DISCLAIMER::: Everything you recognize belongs to JK Rowling and Warner Bros. I just love them so much I wanted to play with them a little.

Summary::: Hermione and Ron... need I say more?

New Beginnings

Chapter Fourteen

Wandless magic ~ the ability to cast spells and charms without the use of a wand.

Hermione had never been very good at wandless magic. The theory behind it was easily understood, but theory alone is not all there is to magic. She had the theory down. She could even perform a few spells, a couple of charms and one hex, but none of that would help her now. All the research she had done after graduating from Hogwarts and the work she had done for the Ministry, would not get her out of this damn cell, or help her defend herself against an armed and very pissed off Ronald Weasley.

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"Okay, Mr. Weasley, tell us again exactly what you remember before my Aurors found you in your attic?" Draco asked.

"Molly and I had just finished an early dinner, and I was having my pudding. Molly was clearing the table, and as she was walking away to set the dishes to washing, I heard an odd sound coming from her direction. As I looked over to her, she turned and pointed her wand at me. I remember thinking how much that sound reminded me of one of those Muggle techy phono things," Arthur Weasley answered, looking confused.

"It has to be Ron then," Bill shouted, shooting out of his chair once again. "He has to be the one who kidnapped Hermione. Then he must have contacted Mum on that techy thing to tell her what he had done."

Bill was pacing the room again, and when he finished his rant, he turned to see his father staring at him.

"What do you mean Ron must have kidnapped Hermione? She is safely tucked away at Hogwarts," Arthur said before turning to look at Draco. "Isn't she?"

"I am afraid, Mr. Weasley, that Hermione was abducted from the gates of Hogwarts around five o'clock yesterday evening," Draco replied. "We have been questioning your sons and seem to have all come to the same conclusion. Ron attacked and stunned her, then somehow moved her without Apparating."

"Well, if he stunned her, then he needed to use a wand. The Ministry snapped his when he was exiled. Since he can't get a new one on his own, he must have stolen someone else's."

"Of course, that explains why he didn't Apparate with her! You can't Apparate with someone else's wand, even if your magics are compatible enough to do small spells. Why didn't I think of that before?" Draco's eyes were almost glowing with the knowledge he had solved one of the riddles of Hermione's kidnapping. "Fred, George, where is your brother living now? My team must go there right away. If he is holding Hermione there, he has had her for more than twelve hours now. There is no telling what he may have done to her in that time."

It was not the twins, but Arthur who answered. "I will take you to him. If he did in fact abduct Hermione, and Molly knows this and is helping him hold her, I want to be there."

"Of course, and I have two guests of my own I plan to bring along when we call on your son," Draco said, leading the way out the door.

Once out in the hall, Harry and Severus joined the Weasleys and Draco.

"What are you doing here, Professor Snape?" Charlie asked, looking shocked.

"I am assisting in locating Hermione, as she is a professor at Hogwarts, and..." Snape paused to find the right words before continuing, "she failed to appear at dinner last night, and I became concerned."

"We are wasting time." Draco shouted, over the whispers from the Weasleys at Severus' answer. "Let's just get going and find Hermione."

With that everyone nodded and headed down the hall and out of the Ministry to the nearest Apparition point.

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Hermione watched as the door to her cell was slowly pushed open. As soon as she saw the wand of the person entering, she slammed all of her weight into the back of the door, and grabbed for the wand as the person in the doorway was knocked off balance from the impact of the heavy door. Wrenching the wand from the hand that grasped it, she spun it around, pointed it at the door and backed away, as it was slammed open.

"*Stupefy!*" shouted a male voice.

Hermione had expected this and dodged the spell shouting, "*Expelliarmus!*"

As the wand shot out of her attacker's hand, Hermione shouted, "*Petrificus T...*"

She was never able to finish as she was hit with, "*Immobulus!*" Her body froze into its position, and she fell to the ground on her side, completely unable to move more than her eyes. She looked about to see who hit her with the hex, but could see no one.

"Well, I can see you are as feisty as ever, wife," Ron growled as he stepped into her limited range of sight. Turning to someone behind him, he shouted, "Get yourself up off the ground, and let Mum repair that broken arm. It won't do to have you slacking off on your duties due to your own stupidity."

Hermione heard a groan and shuffling.

"Hermione, Hermione, Hermione. So I have you here at last. Mum is quite proud of me for getting you to come back," Ron said, picking up the wand that she had shot out of his hand and casting, *"Incarcerous!"*

Severus, Harry, Draco, and the Weasleys Apparated into the alley behind the small brick building containing Ron's flat. Arthur cast a Disillusionment Charm on the rescue party so that any Muggles who might be in the area would not see them as they made their way to the front of the building. At the front entrance, Charlie and Bill kept lookout as Arthur and Severus worked on opening the door.

Chapter Fifteen

AN2::: IF YOU, OR SOMEONE YOU KNOW ARE BEING ABUSED Physically,mentally, or emotionally you can call the National Domestic Violence Hotline at 1-800-799 SAFE (7233)

Chapter 16

Chapter 16 of 17

After nearly being killed by her husband, Hermione returns to Hogwarts. (Ultimately a SS/HG, but starts out a little different.)**NOW COMPLETE**

DISCLAIMER:: Everything you recognize belongs to JK Rowling and Warner Bros. I just love them so much I wanted to play with them a little.

Summary:: Hermione is at St. Mungo's.

New Beginnings

Chapter Sixteen

Harry walked into the small hospital room carrying two cups of tea. Seating himself in the chair next to Severus, he passed one cup to the dark man and turned to look sadly at the unconscious form of his best friend. It had been nearly a month since they had rescued Hermione from Ron, and she had regained consciousness only twice, but just for a few moments each time.

"Has she woken up today?" Harry whispered to Severus.

"No, she was restless earlier this morning, but did not awaken," Severus replied.

"You should get some sleep. She wouldn't want you to make yourself sick worrying over her."

"My health is of little importance. I want to be here when she wakes."

Harry eyed Severus for several long minutes before asking, "How long?"

"How long what, Mr. Potter-Malfoy?" Severus responded with a scowl.

"How long, *Professor*, have you been in love with my best friend?"

"Love is for women and sentimental old fools, and I do not subscribe to it," Severus countered. "However, if you would like to know how long I have admired Hermione, then my answer would be since you were both in your sixth year."

"Sixth year, eh? Well, as she was of legal age at that time, why didn't make a move on her then?" Harry asked, working out the timing in his head.

"It would hardly have been appropriate. She was my student, plus there was a war going on, I was leading two lives, and she was enamored of Mr. Weasley," Severus said, almost wistfully.

"Yeah, and we all know how well that turned out, don't we?" Harry responded sourly before he stood and left the room.

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"Minerva, I am sorry, but I simply will not return to Hogwarts until she is awake. If the Board of Governors has a problem with that, then I will tender my resignation here and now."

"Now, Severus, I don't think it will come to that. You stay there and take care of our girl," Minerva said with a smile. "I will deal with the Governors."

Minerva winked at Severus, and her head disappeared as she ended the Floo call.

Turning on his heel and walking briskly down the hallway to Hermione's room, Severus idly wondered how long it would take for the boils Minerva was sure to hex Dharma Talon, head of the Board of Governors, with to heal. Entering and crossing the room, he looked down onto Hermione's face and sighed as he seated himself.

He had occupied the same chair day and night for the last six weeks, and his arse was starting to protest every time he came within a foot of the dratted thing. Picking up Hermione's hand he held it in both of his. Bringing it to his lips, he kissed it gently, and leaned his face against it.

"Please, Hermione, please wake up. I miss you so much." Severus sighed deeply, and continued, "I miss you. I need you to be all right. I... I love you."

Hermione's hand twitched, and Severus' head shot up. Looking at her face, he saw her eyes slowly flutter open. She looked up at Severus and opened her mouth to speak.

"Angel! Am I in heaven?" she asked, her voice barely a whisper.

"No, this is not heaven," he whispered, pushing a lock of hair off her forehead. "Sshhh, Hermione, do not try to speak."

A tear slipped from her eye, and Severus gently brushed it away with the pad of one callused thumb.

"Sev... Severus? Is that you?"

"Yes, my dear, it is I," he whispered, his voice raw with emotion.

"Is... is he dead? Did they kill him?" Hermione asked. Then choking, she asked, "Can he hurt me anymore?"

"Hush now, no, he can never hurt you again. I will explain everything, but first we need to get a Healer to look at you."

As if summoned by the mere thought of her, Healer Valencia entered the room.

"Hermione, it is about time you woke up. I have missed our talks and wondered when we would have another one." Waving her wand over Hermione's small form, she tsk-ed. "Well, other than being in great need of a nutritious meal, I see nothing in your scans to worry about."

Turning to Severus, the witch waved her wand again and frowned.

"You on the other hand, sir, need sleep as well as food."

Turning back to Hermione, she said, "If you had slept much longer, I was going to be forced to dose him with a sleeping draught. It just isn't healthy to only nap on and off for six weeks. But, now that you are back with us, maybe you can find a way to get him to sleep," she said with a wink. With that, she spun on her heel, glaring at Severus as she swept from the room.

Chapter 17

Chapter 17 of 17

After nearly being killed by her husband, Hermione returns to Hogwarts. (Ultimately a SS/HG, but starts out a little different.)**NOW COMPLETE**

DISCLAIMER::: Everything you recognize belongs to JK Rowling and Warner Bros. I just love them so much I wanted to play with them a little.

Summary:: Hermione gets out of the hospital.

New Beginnings

Chapter Seventeen

Hermione stood on the platform for the Hogwarts Express looking out at the path leading up to the gates. Taking a deep breath, she started walking. Severus had wanted to escort her back to Hogwarts upon her release from St Mungo's, but she had insisted that she couldn't spend the rest of her life afraid to go anywhere by herself.

When she passed through the gates without incident, she released a breath she was not aware she was holding. As she passed Hagrid's hut, he looked up from weeding his vegetable patch and called out, "'Ello, 'ermione! 'Tis good to see ye back."

"It's good to *be* back, Hagrid," Hermione said, smiling.

When she arrived at the castle entrance, she was greeted by a smiling Headmistress.

"Hermione, dear, it is so good to see you back. How are you feeling?"

"I am doing well, thank you, Minerva."

"Well, I expect to see you at dinner this evening, and I will not hear any excuses."

"Of course, Minerva, I will see you at dinner."

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The lady in the portrait to Hermione's quarters was so happy to see Hermione that she nearly spun right out of her frame in excitement.

"Dreamless Sleep," Hermione called out

"I am sorry dear, but your password was changed while you were gone," the portrait informed her

"What? It's April. The password should be Dreamless Sleep. Who changed my password?"

A silky voice behind her said, "I did."

Turning around, Hermione looked into the face of Severus Snape and inquired, "Why did you change my password, Professor Snape?"

"It is more secure, Professor Granger, if you change your password at irregular intervals, rather than on the first of every month," he replied.

Hermione looked at Severus for several long seconds before smiling. "I missed you too, Severus. Besides, who needs a secure password with you in the castle to protect me?"

Severus' face stayed as expressionless as ever, but his eyes smiled as he looked from Hermione to the portrait and whispered, "Amortentia!"

"A love potion? How interesting," Hermione murmured as she entered her quarters with Severus following shortly behind her.

"What was that, Hermione?"

"Oh, nothing. Just thinking out loud," Hermione answered. Then gesturing toward the sitting area, she said, "Please, Severus, have a seat. I will put my things away, and then we can have tea."

Rushing through a door in the back of her quarters that led to her bedchamber, Hermione pulled the shrunken items out of her robe pocket and tossed them onto her bed. Quickly casting the spell to return them to normal size, she waved her wand again, and her clothes put themselves in the wardrobe. Severus had to duck as her books floated out into the sitting room to reshell themselves.

When Hermione returned to the sitting room, Severus was just pouring the tea. She took the cup he offered her and sat on one end of her sofa, tucking her feet under her.

"How are you feeling, Hermione?" Severus asked.

"Other than being annoyed that everyone keeps asking me that, I am feeling alright," Hermione answered with a slight edge in her voice.

"I am sorry, Hermione. If you truly are well, I will stop asking," Severus said. Then looking her in the eyes, he said gently, "However, you look troubled. Is there something bothering you?"

"I... well...yes, there is. I have been trying to understand why."

Looking puzzled, Severus asked, "Why, what?"

"Why, Severus, did you spend six weeks at my bedside while I was unconscious, and then another three visiting me daily after I awoke," Hermione inquired softly.

