

A Potion With An Unintended Notion

by *karelia*

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One-Shot

Chapter 1 of 1

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The characters are never mine,
They're JKR's who also likes wine
So when I'm done playing,
Without any fraying,
I'll return them in a state which is fine.

* * *

A Potion With An Unintended Notion

Ron Weasley was unhappy. How his life could have turned so sad when he should be having the happiest of times was beyond him. Everything had looked so picture-book perfect not even two weeks ago. And now... this! She was still down there, in the dungeon, with that greasy git. And it was nearly dinnertime!

Harry had finally succeeded in bringing down Voldemort with Ron's and Hermione's help, and the three friends instantly became celebrities, famous heroes of the wizarding world, made even more sought after by the fact that Hogwarts' Headmistress insistently refused to let her charges be interviewed by the wizarding media.

"No, you cannot interview my students, no matter *how* famous they are! With the NEWTs barely three months away, they have more important things to do than humouring reporters!" McGonagall replied yet again to yet another reporter.

Rita Skeeter, reinstated reporter of the *Daily Prophet*, botheration extraordinaire, whose veins appeared to be filled with calumny rather than blood, did not let the refusal stop her. Having utilised her journalistic insight of people, she had registered her Animagus status shortly after her interview with Harry Potter had been published in the *Quibbler* during Harry's fifth year. After all, she was loath to give that Muggle-born friend of Potter another chance to turn her life upside-down.

So, when McGonagall turned down Rita's request to interview the famous three, she got ready to use her imagination as well as her Animagus ability to churn out articles

that would put the newspaper back in its number one spot in the wizarding world.

Initially, Harry, Ron, and Hermione had not wanted to return to Hogwarts for their seventh year because Horcruxes needed to be found before any strategy could be formed on the defeat of Voldemort.

However, through some stroke of sheer luck, one after the other had been discovered in quick succession, and at the end of the summer holidays, the trio had accepted McGonagall's invitation to return to school on the grounds that the Headmistress would allow them to miss lessons as and when needed in the name of planning Voldemort's downfall. All three agreed that it would be conducive to their efforts, seeing that the new headquarters of the Order were the vacated chambers of their former Potions professor and murderer of Albus Dumbledore.

It was strategic planning, Arithmetic calculations, insider information from an unknown source, and not least the fact that Voldemort's magic had been steadily weakening with the destruction of each Horcrux. Fortunately for the good folks of the wizarding world, Riddle had been far too deluded to notice the diminishing of his magic and his followers far too interested in self-preservation to point out that insignificant fact to him...it was worth neither a Crucio nor an Avada Kedavra.

The trio had often wondered whether Snape had been the one to provide them with information of plans of an attack, but usually, Harry and Ron dismissed the idea.

"I bet he is one of Voldemort's staunchest followers. I still can't get over the fact that he was clever enough to even fool Dumbledore," Harry said and then changed the subject to a more pleasant one. Ron wholeheartedly shared Harry's opinion.

Hermione had given up trying to get her friends to look at the situation from a different point of view and kept her thoughts to herself. As a whole, she shared their view that Snape was an unpleasant person. She had been at the receiving end of his vicious sarcasm far too often to think him even remotely likeable. However, she was unwilling to take Harry's views on Snape as fact. Too many unknown factors stopped her from forming a truly negative opinion of the man, not least because she had been harbouring a tremendous admiration and respect for him ever since the end of her fourth year, albeit in secret.

One of the reasons the Order had decided to utilise Snape's chambers as its new headquarters, aside from its ideal location inside the school, was the security it offered. The Floo network could be accessed directly *from* the living-room fireplace by anyone; however, only its former occupant and the late Headmaster had been able to Floo directly *into* the living room. Anyone else trying to do so inevitably ended up in a small, dingy, heavily warded storeroom and could only hope that either Snape or Dumbledore would hear the appropriate alarms going off.

One week after Voldemort's defeat, core members of the Order met at headquarters. The Headmistress, who had also taken over Albus' post as the head of the clandestine organisation, had received an obscure message that stated there would be a curious revelation within the headquarters. As the writing was identical to that of earlier messages, which had played a great deal in the downfall of Voldemort, Minerva decided it was safe to heed the words and called for a meeting.

The Order members sat scattered around the dungeon's living room when, to everyone's surprise, the flames in the fireplace flared green.

"But... But that's not possible," stuttered Harry. His expression switched from surprise to horror and hate when Severus Snape stepped through the flames into the room.

Most Order members instantly pointed their wands at him, and he held his hands up.

Slowly and deliberately, he said, "All I ask you is to wait for another's arrival before you pass judgement."

Harry found himself unable to resist the urge to put Snape into a full body bind.

"Harry! You can't do that! At least give him a chance to explain himself," Hermione admonished her friend as she unbound her former professor.

Ron looked at her incredulously. "You... you're siding with the traitor! How could you, Hermione?" he uttered.

Hermione rolled her eyes. "Use your brain, Ron! Do you seriously think Professor Snape would turn up here at Hogwarts if he didn't have *something* important up his sleeve? He's been hunted by a whole bunch of Aurors, and *none* of them could find even a trace of him!"

"I bet he's here only for his own interest! He's a *murderer*, Hermione," said Harry, his voice full of contempt.

In the heat of the argument between the three friends, nobody noticed the flames turn green again.

Hermione suddenly turned her attention to somewhere behind Harry and her eyes widened.

"P... Pro... Professor Dumbledore?" she asked, disbelief evident in her voice.

Harry's head flew around. It couldn't be; the Headmaster was dead!

"If you would kindly take your wands off Severus. He can't feel comfortable in such a vulnerable position." The allegedly dead Headmaster looked sternly at the Order members.

"Now, why don't we sit down and answer the questions that are no doubt burning your tongues," Dumbledore suggested and steered his alleged murderer towards the sofa.

The question and answer session continued late into the night. Doubts that the Headmaster might have been a Polyjuiced version were laid to rest when Albus told both Harry Potter and Minerva McGonagall about previous situations only they could know of.

When the Order meeting finally ended, people left deep in thought. How wrong they had been about Severus Snape...

"He's still a greasy git," muttered Ron as the trio entered the Gryffindor common room.

"Oh, Ron!" Hermione shook her head at her boyfriend's impertinence. "At least he's not evil, and I prefer his lessons over Slughorn's a million times."

Over the next days, Ron and Hermione's previous good-natured banter gradually turned into bickering and eventually outright fighting. It was always trivial matters that started it, and the other's reply would grow increasingly sharper with each return.

A week later, Hermione had enough. "I love you dearly, Ron, but this is just not working," she said in frustration. "Instead of concentrating on the NEWTs, I'm wasting my energy fighting with you. The NEWT results are too important for me. My entire future depends on them!"

"Of course, Hermione! Your studies have always been more important to you than any relationship! You can't even be bothered to listen when I talk *of* my interests!" Ron countered bitterly.

Hermione realised what he said was the truth. Since hunting down Voldemort was no longer an issue, there was really no interest they shared. Hermione liked to widen her knowledge in scholarly subjects; Ron was interested in Quidditch and, on a good day, in becoming an Auror. She had never held an interest in Quidditch beyond wanting Gryffindor to win, and Aurory just did not suit her as she found out while playing a key part in the final battle against Voldemort. Her strength lay in finding information and putting it together to make sense.

She sighed. "You're right, Ron. I think our interests are far too different for this to work. Let's call it a *daybefore* we fight to the point of it ending our friendship. Let's save

that at least." She looked at him pleadingly.

Following his initial shock over her unceremonious break-up, Ron realised perfectly clearly that Hermione had been right, even though his pride was hurting sorely *over* her dumping *him*.

Breakfast was awkward the next morning. Harry was obviously siding with Ron, as was Ginny, so Hermione simply took a textbook out to read while eating her toast. She hoped that they would eventually be friends again. In the meantime, she would concentrate on preparing for the NEWTs without getting side-tracked by relationship issues.

Their first lesson was double Potions. Harry and Ron still hated Snape, but fortunately, Dumbledore had insisted that even with Snape back as the Potions professor, the two would continue with Potions to have at least a fair chance to enter Auror training.

All students were already seated when Snape swept into the classroom, his cloak billowing viciously. He waved his wand at the board and instructions appeared.

"You will brew *Oratio Soluta* today. Whilst it is not considered an important potion save for aspiring authors, perhaps, it tends to come up in your NEWT practical because *every single step* has to be followed *precisely* for it to work." He threw a challenging look at Harry and Ron who both squirmed uncomfortably.

"If you fail to follow the instructions as *written on the board*, you may find yourself sprouting utter nonsense for a day or three," he continued, and looking at Harry with a raised eyebrow, he sneered, "Yes, Potter, even *more* nonsense than usual, although I find that difficult to believe possible. Now, start brewing!"

Snape sat down at his desk to grade some papers while covertly watching the dunderheads of the class. The students were working quietly, some efficiently, others less so, but Snape did not expect either Potter or Weasley to suddenly acquire insight in the art of potions. Weasley in particular would have blown himself up on numerous occasions had the Dream Team's brain, Miss Granger, not stopped him.

"Ron, no!" hissed Hermione when she glanced at him. He was about to add roughly chopped rosemary to his cauldron. "They're supposed to be ground, not chopped!"

Snape swiftly moved through the classroom towards the disaster Mr Weasley was effecting. Unfortunately, on this occasion, even Hermione Granger was unable to prevent the damage. As she attempted to jerk Ron's arm away from the cauldron just as their professor arrived there, Ron was already dropping the rosemary. The mess inside the cauldron gave an indignant bubble and then in a most spectacular fashion doused the unfortunate Potions professor and Ron Weasley's former girlfriend. For reasons beyond his knowledge, Ron had stepped away from the cauldron barely before the potion exploded.

The effect of the misbrewed potion was instantly noticed when Hermione started to yell at her ex-boyfriend.

"What do you think you are doing?"

Learned nothing in class about brewing?"

You are a real pain,

Possibly insane.

Maybe you should take up sewing!"

Some students were snickering at Hermione's words, but went silent very quickly when Snape spoke.

"Miss Granger is right, Mr Weasley,

Your actions, indeed, have been measly!

You must be quite mad,

Which is rather sad.

This sordid episode's quite beastly!"

Nobody dared to laugh. Instead, every single student was staring at him. He glared at them, and everyone quickly diverted their eyes to anywhere but his person.

Snape's attention turned back to Ron. Scowling, he started, his voice dangerously low,

"Mr Weasley, I'll not let this pass,

This mess might improve as a gas,

I have a notion,

This isn't a potion,

However, I'll now dismiss class!"

The entire class made a straight beeline to the door, accompanied by Snape's scowl, and even quicker than usual, the classroom emptied, except for Hermione. Something she was unable to pinpoint compelled her to stay within Snape's vicinity.

"I'm sorry it looks like I'm stalking,

Perhaps this will change with more talking.

I am not a bitch,

but merely a witch,

maybe you'll go with me walking."

He seemed to ponder her words. As much as she had to suppress giggles when she realised the potion was causing them to speak in limericks, the urge to laugh was now dissipating rapidly. Her eyes widened as Snape's reply hit her.

"The potion has given us a link,

Now, what we both do best is think,

I admit indeed

you've become my need.

If you don't mind, I'll go find some ink."

Before Hermione could stop herself, she blurted out,

"Can I believe you've stopped sneering?

Your ear could do with an earring,

I wouldn't mind tea,

Or go to the sea,

And you're welcome to indulge in leering."

The moment the words were out, Hermione's hand went crashing on her mouth. *Don't speak, don't speak, don't speak*, she thought frantically, forcing all her concentration to remain silent.

Strange, unknown, rolling emotions made her stomach flutter when Snape replied,

"Since we're alone, how about kissing,

or else we won't know what we're missing,

Only you, my witch,

can cure that itch,

But at me, you'll only be hissing."

Hermione was certain it was the same kind of emotions that flickered across her professor's face before he schooled it into his typical expression of disdain. Then he abruptly moved to his desk, picked up a quill, dipped it in ink and started writing on a piece of parchment.

Curious what this was about, and not at all trusting herself what words would come out of her mouth next if she allowed herself to speak, Hermione moved towards him. She grinned with relief as she read his words.

As I thought, this blasted potion only affects our speech. If we stick to communicating on paper, we'll likely save ourselves as well as each other considerable embarrassment.

He looked at her questioningly, so Hermione picked up another quill and wrote,

Agreed.

He pulled the parchment closer and started writing again, this time more hesitantly.

I'd love to tell you that I did not mean a thing of what I said. However, seeing that we both find ourselves in an unfortunate situation for which neither can be blamed, the least we can do is be truthful. I did mean all I said.

Not only did relief wash over Hermione upon reading his words, but she also realised that *she* had meant everything she had uttered as limericks. *This cannot be happening*, she thought in disbelief.

She slowly started to note down her thoughts, utterly compelled to stick to nothing but the truth.

This morning, I could not have imagined that either of us would ever have a nice word to say to each other. Since the potion hit me, I feel I can happily ignore your lesser character traits. I have always admired you for your intelligence and your fierce loyalty to the Headmaster and the side of Light, ever since I saw you show Fudge the Dark Mark.

Hermione avoided looking at him out of fear of him making fun of her, fear of him not taking her seriously, fear he might admonish her for being so bold. And she absolutely dreaded the possibility of him rejecting her.

Snape's hand softly moved to cup her chin to turn her towards him, and she had no choice but to move her head along with his hand until she faced him. She was surprised to find that not only his movement was soft but also the feel of his hand on her face was as soft as a gentle drop of drizzle on a rainy Sunday afternoon. It felt like pure bliss.

He started softly, never leaving her eyes,

"I can't see how for me you could care,

But it's worth even if it's a dare,

I've rarely felt love,

As the gods know above,

You can look inside me I'm bare"

Their eyes still locked, Hermione realised with a jolt that he was offering her full access to his mind. Gently, quietly, as if on tip-toes, she entered. She gasped. She reeled.

The proof was right there. And by the looks of it, his affection for her had not just started the moment Ron's potion had dowsed him, either, she was surprised to see. He had had several conversations about *her* with Dumbledore, and she was not sure what surprised her more...his confessions of caring for her or Dumbledore's evident approval.

"Severus," she whispered in awe, and once again under control of that ill-fated potion, she continued,

"I wish I could do better,

It's not like I read in a letter,

To me you are much,

You might have thought such,

But maybe to you, it won't matter."

"Hermione." It was barely a whisper, but to her, the sound of *her* name rolling of his tongue so softly was utterly endearing.

Her chin still softly held by his hand, his eyes again locked with hers, as if he was unable to turn away, his answer came in whispers.

"Of course it matters to me,

I hope together we'll be

What matters not,

Is another plot,

Only you and me, it should be."

"Yes..." breathed Hermione, her eyes mere inches from his. When his mouth found hers, her eyes closed, and she revelled in the feeling of his tongue playing with hers. Hermione thought distantly that engaging in more such playful activities would be sheer delight.

Suddenly, a disturbing thud rang in her ear, and with a feel of dread, Hermione broke the kiss and looked around. A beetle had just fallen off a stack of parchments on Severus' desk and now hurried to reach the wall.

Hermione gasped. Then she snarled,

"It's that bitch...it's Rita Skeeter,

Oh, how I wish I could beat her,

Never up to good,

And ever so rude,

If I catch her I will eat her!"

Severus laughed. A deep, genuine laugh that was the most beautiful sound ever to Hermione's ears. She was startled to realise it did not matter to her what Rita Skeeter would write. As long as Severus was on her side, she could face anything.

Sobering quickly, he asked, "You *do* realise that this abominable excuse of a reporter will write what she witnessed for the entire wizarding world to read?"

Hermione shrugged. "Those who love me will respect my choice of mate, and those who don't are not worth bothering with," she dismissed. "The potion has worn off! We can talk normally!" Hermione was delighted that she was no longer compelled to speak in limericks.

"So it has," he said slowly, looking at her intently. "Does that mean... you've gone back to feeling indifferent?"

Hermione returned his gaze. "No. I think if you turned me away now, I would be heart-broken." Not able to interpret the expression on his face, she reluctantly asked, "Are you? Turning me away, I mean."

In one fast, liquid movement, Hermione found herself captured in his arms. *This is where I belong*, she thought dazedly.

"No. I will never turn you away, Hermione. Merlin knows, I don't deserve you, but if you are willing to give this a try, you'll make me a very happy man," he replied, holding her tightly.

Then he moved his hands and rested them on her shoulders, looking at her intensely. "We better tell Albus, though. It would not do if he learned of this by reading the *Daily Prophet!*"

The meeting with the Headmaster had gone surprisingly well, and Hermione was relieved. Dumbledore had only asked for discretion and to not make their newly found love for each other known until Hermione graduated. What surprised her most was that there was no mention of either Hermione or Severus in the *Daily Prophet*, but neither she nor Severus managed to extract information on how Albus had accomplished this.

When Hermione eventually re-emerged in the Gryffindor common room, she was instantly surrounded by her classmates who were firing questions at her.

"Did you survive hours stuck with the greasy git?"

"Was he being a total prat?"

"How long did the potion last?"

She held her hands up to stop the incessant questioning by all and sundry. "Obviously, I survived. No, he wasn't a prat. The potion wore off after a few hours.

"Now, I'm really tired, and besides, I've lost a whole afternoon of good studying time. I'll see you at breakfast." She headed for her dorm and sat down at her desk. Much thinking was to be done about the most unusual events of today and the fact that, all of a sudden, a future without Severus Snape playing a great part in her life was inconceivable.

* * *

Thankfully, the last few weeks before graduation flew by. Hermione took every opportunity to sneak into Snape's quarters. She wanted to be well prepared for the NEWTs and was grateful that he seemed to enjoy her company even if she spent her time with him studying. She felt much at home in his quarters. Not only was it a considerably quieter space for studying, she loved that they frequently stole kisses from each other.

One evening, a few days before the first NEWT exam was scheduled, Hermione and Severus indulged in an evening of conversation and reluctant celebration. Flitwick had accepted Hermione as a Charms apprentice.

"I shall rather enjoy seeing you every day, Hermione," Severus said softly.

"So will I," Hermione agreed wholeheartedly. "I'm getting tired of being discreet, you know. I want to shout out to the world that we're together, and I want to be able to see you whenever I want to, not just when I manage to sneak away."

The Leaving Feast was to be a special occasion. Dumbledore had decided that *everyone* at Hogwarts would remember this first Leaving Feast after Voldemort's demise for long to come. Dinner itself was even more spectacular than on former occasions, a new up and coming wizarding band was performing an eclectic mix of Muggle and wizarding music, and instead of wearing dress robes, students were allowed to wear whatever took their fancy.

Hermione settled on a Muggle-style long, black skirt, with a fitted black top showing a white mask reminiscent of the one used in a Muggle musical she had once seen.

What made this Leaving Feast the most memorable was the fact that the usually dour Potions professor, usually clad in forbidding black robes, showed up in black jeans and a black shirt, his hair neatly tied in a ponytail, his face free of his usual scowl, cutting an altogether rather attractive figure.

"Blimey," said Lavender, "I'd never thought I'd say this, but he ain't half bad looking!"

Hermione snorted. "You don't say." She noticed that Severus was heading straight for her and grinned at him, knowing *exactly* what kind of reactions would shortly follow. She was not to be disappointed.

When he reached her, ignoring Lavender and her other classmates completely, only having eyes for her, he asked, "May I have the honour of you dancing with me, my witch?"

With a gleam in her eyes, she replied, "Certainly, my wizard." As she made her way to the dance floor with him, she saw from the corner of her eye that Lavender had fainted.

Hermione was revelling in the feel of his arms around her and completely oblivious to the hundreds of eyes staring at her with disbelief.

"Do you think a few more people will faint if I kiss you?" Severus asked, his eyes gleaming.

He was evidently allowing his playful side out tonight, Hermione thought gleefully.

The music has changed to a slow tune, and the dance floor was finally filling up with more couples taking an opportunity to get closer.

"Oh, I could imagine..." Hermione replied good-naturedly. At that moment, she spotted Ron and Susan Bones dancing nearby. "Now would be as good a moment as any, you know. I've missed kissing you too much to wait any longer," she said with mischief in her eyes.

Without further ado, his mouth came crashing down on hers, and his arms tightened around her. Neither noticed nor cared that this kiss was witnessed by a few hundred students who unanimously stared, their mouths gaping like a pond full of trout.

Eventually, the music stopped, and Hermione heard Susan Bones cast an *Ennervate* on Ron who lay in a crumble on the floor.

Severus, his arm still around Hermione's shoulders, steered her to where Ron was slowly getting up, rubbing his eyes. "Mr Weasley," he said in an almost pleasant manner, "I should really thank you for screwing up the *Oratio Soluta* that day. Even though it didn't get you a good grade, it *did* get me... love."

Hermione grinned, and Severus turned towards her to kiss her once more.

* * *

It was the first anniversary of Voldemort's defeat, and Hermione and Severus were in his living room. As the day had been declared an official holiday, they decided on having breakfast in his quarters rather than in the Great Hall.

An owl tapped at the window, and Severus stood up to open it. He looked at the envelope and, noting it was addressed to both of them, he untied it. The owl took off as soon as it was free of the package.

"What is it, Severus?" Hermione asked, still chewing on a bread roll.

Severus had opened the envelope to reveal a book. *A Potion Gone Wrong Makes Love Really Strong* by Rita Skeeter. He turned to the end of the book, and said, "It sounds like a despicable romance, and probably is, seeing who the author is." His eyes skimmed over the synopsis, and then he wordlessly handed the book to Hermione.

She read and dread filled her. She opened the book, and her eyes widened as she read the dedication.

This book is dedicated to Hermione Granger and Severus Snape, without whom I would never have found such a realistic plot line and to Albus Dumbledore who provided further ideas.

The question of how Albus had convinced the reporter to refrain from publishing a sordid article about the events in the dungeons that day was now resolved.

Fin

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A/N

Thankfully, the potion has worn off now, so I won't Crucio you further with silly limericks.

Many thanks to SouthernWitch69 who agreed on very short notice to beta-read this. You rule!

Like most authors, I am most grateful for your opinion in the form of a review.