

My Savior

by togspled

Hermione is faced with some tough times emotionally this year. Who will it be who helps her cope and survive? Will he, a fallen angel himself, succeed in saving her?

Ratings and warnings for later chapters.

(this is my first ever fic. be nice!)

Chapter 1

Chapter 1 of 8

Hermione is faced with some tough times emotionally this year. Who will it be who helps her cope and survive? Will he, a fallen angel himself, succeed in saving her?

Ratings and warnings for later chapters.

(this is my first ever fic. be nice!)

Disclaimer: Everything belongs to J.K. Rowling. I own nothing.

As she sank into the steaming water of her bath, Hermione Granger wearily reminisced about the day that had just passed. All her classes went well, as usual, except for Potions. It seemed as though Professor Snape had been having a wretched day, and taking it out on the Gryffindor students had been his only way to cope. 'How typical,' she snorted. Her beloved house had lost forty-five points that day just in Potions! She hated how he always found some excuse to dock them a few points here and there. 'Hell,' she thought, 'he takes points off us when those rotten Slytherins mess up!' She had also been given a detention for the following evening for something she didn't know she'd done. She sighed and sank deeper into the lilac-scented water.

"You are such a bastard, Severus," she growled exasperatedly. For some reason she couldn't quite figure out though, his name sounded so eloquent rolling off her tongue like that. She repeated it a few times, thinking about how it suited such a severe man so well. She couldn't quite picture him having a girlfriend, but such a name was definitely one to call out in bed.

'Merlin! Where did *that* come from?' Why was she thinking about him like that? It was so wrong on so many counts. The fact she had a boyfriend, their age difference, their current relationship. 'Perhaps relationship was the wrong word to use there,' she mused; for all it did was make her ponder what a relationship with the greasy bat of the dungeons would be like. Little did she know, deep in the bowels of the school, someone was thinking the same about her.

Severus lay on his soft bed. It was a beautiful, dark cherry wood, four-poster bed with intricately carved designs. In honour of his house colours, his duvet and pillow cases were a dark emerald with silver piping. As he began to fall asleep, he thought back happily on his Slytherin and Gryffindor double Potions that day. It had been rather successful, he had to admit. Slytherin gained twenty points, and he had the pleasure of taking forty-five from Gryffindor.

First, he took 5 points each from The-Boy-Who-Couldn't-Just-Bloody-Die-Already and his sidekick, "Measly", for being late. True, they were only one minute late, but one minute in making a potion could mean the difference between a potion and a poison. It was a good lesson to learn he decided, and a few points might help drive it home.

Then there was Mr. Longbottom. He didn't know why that incredibly challenged boy insisted on taking his course. As per usual, Neville had prepared his ingredients wrong. Instead of finely slicing his bat wing, the imbecile had diced it. How much clearer could he make the directions? After thoroughly scolding the trembling boy, he subtracted twenty points from Minerva's rascals. The last fifteen points he took, though, he could never forget.

While he had figured out early in the year that the young Mr. Weasley was seeing Miss. Granger, he hadn't realized why any boy could have interest in her. He soon found out why, though.

While sitting there, looking innocent, the insufferable know-it-all began to toy with the end of her quill against her lips. From all his potions research in the library, he knew full well that she did this whenever thinking hard. As he watched, however, he found it getting harder and harder to concentrate on covering the first-years' papers with red ink. Mr. Weasley had noticed her behaviour as well, and something was becoming hard for him too—not just his concentration.

Disgustedly, Snape looked away. It wasn't until he heard a loud clatter and a scream of pain that he dared look up to find Mr. Potter drenched in a very hot potion. Apparently, Mr. Weasley had gotten so distracted by the oral acts Miss Granger was performing on her quill that he'd knocked a cauldron over, right onto his friend. Professor Snape excused Harry and told him to go wash up, that no harm would come to him. He yelled for Ron to clean up the mess he had made in the Potions classroom and took fifteen points from him. He had an overpowering desire to give a detention, but to whom? Ah, yes, the girl who had caused all the trouble to begin with—Hermione Granger. She obviously had no idea what she had done wrong, but the intelligent witch, for once, held her tongue as he informed her of her punishment.

'How could she not know?' Severus wondered. Was she really that innocent or naive that she didn't understand what effect such a simple act could have on a man? She really needed to think through such things in a bit more detail before committing such foolish acts of sensuality.

'*Sensuality?* The fumes must be getting to me. Miss Granger is not in the least bit sensual or attractive or...' His mind stopped short as he realized that she actually was. She had grown up over the past few months; it didn't take a Potions master to figure that one out. Even under her robes, one could tell that her chest had filled out, her hips had become voluptuous, and when the front of her robes flew open, one could clearly see that her legs had become long and shapely.

He wondered what it would be like to hold her perfect body in his arms and kiss her softly, murmuring sweet words of affection. Snape found himself aroused and also found it sickening—she was his student after all! He knew, of course, that she was of age not only in the wizarding world but also by Muggle standards. Thanks to her use of the Time-Turner, she had turned eighteen a while ago. Still, logic reigned supreme, and the blood that was coursing through his manhood once again returned to his brain. Though the Dark Lord had fallen some time ago, Severus found the ability to control one's mind was beneficial in many ways.

It wasn't as though she would ever want him anyways. No woman did. Except the Knockturn Alley whores, but that was simply because he tipped well. Hermione, however, was a real woman: a virtuous one, a proper, sensible, intelligent, honourable one. She definitely wouldn't let him ever get near her, even with a love potion and a calming draft.

He sighed and grabbed the vial of Dreamless Sleep kept on the nightstand near his bed. Lifting it before him, he toasted: "Here's to you, Miss Granger; may you cease to plague my mind with impure thoughts!" He downed the contents quickly and fell asleep almost as soon as his head hit the soft downy pillows.

(a/n: This is my first ever fanfic. I'm so nervous about posting it! Please be nice. I'm not sure if I should continue it or not.)

Chapter 2

Chapter 2 of 8

Aggravated assault arrives ardently

The next morning, Hermione awoke to a knocking outside her door.

"Mione! Mione, open up please!"

"Mmmm," she moaned as she stretched, her aching muscles complaining. "Hold your hippogriffs, Ron! I'm coming."

Swinging her legs over the side of the bed, Hermione grimaced at the cold floor beneath her feet. As she made her way over to the door, she straightened her nightdress out and tried to pat her hair down so she wouldn't look a complete mess for her boyfriend.

"Hallo," she mumbled, opening the door slowly.

"Mione..."

"Yes, Ron?" Her tongue felt thick, and her speech sounded slurred from lack of sleep.

"Gods, you're beautiful in the morning." He pushed his way inside her room roughly.

Although she was surprised at first, Hermione remembered Dumbledore taking off the wards for her room when she had explained that she, Harry, and Ron needed a place to be alone for their Order work. The head girl's room was only logical, seeing as nobody else, save for the head boy and the teachers, had entry. She thought he would have put them back on by now, but no matter; it felt too good being kissed like this to care.

She wrapped her arms around Ron's neck and admired how sculpted he had become from Quidditch. She didn't realize they were moving until she felt her back pressed up against the wall. She moaned slightly as Ron's lips caressed her neck. As soon as she felt his hands pulling her nightdress up, though, she panicked. She tried to push back against him, but his body weight and strength kept her pinned against the rough stone.

"Ron. Slow down. Ron, stop, you're hurting me! Please!"

"Mmmm, yeah, baby, beg for me," he murmured against her as his hands kept up their ministrations.

A feeling of dread hit Hermione like an *Expelliarmus*. Was he going to rape her, right here, before breakfast even started? What would happen if she kept saying no? Would

her beloved Ron stop? Would he respect her wishes to remain a virgin until marriage? The way he was acting, she didn't know.

"Ron, STOP!" She yelled as loudly as she could, hoping it would bring him back to reason. Instead, it angered him.

He grabbed both her arms and shook her violently. "Don't you tell me to stop, woman! You think you're better than me? You think you're stronger than me?" Her head started slamming against her haven's wall. With each rough hit, her mind started losing more of its ability to focus. "Don't. You. Tell. Me. No!" On the last word, she gave in to the overwhelming pain and crumpled against him, blood on the wall and dripping out of the back of her skull, her world gone black.

Ron, realizing what he had just done, dropped her to the floor, whispered, *Obliviate*, " and ran.

Draco Malfoy, proud Slytherin, and Hogwarts head boy, had seen a lot in his young days. He had personal experience with the giving and receiving of *Crucio*. He had watched as dozens of Muggles were subjected to *Avada Kedavra* and had Obliviated many people on several occasions. He knew what carnage was, understood death all too well. It was because of his extensive knowledge of the dead that when he found Granger on the floor in her room, he knew she was not far from the netherworld. Not bothering to take care with her quickly cooling body, Draco muttered a lightening charm and lifted the girl in a fireman's carry. Kicking open the unlocked door, he ran as quickly as he could to the hospital wing.

This would be so much easier on a broomstick, he thought miserably, as his legs seemed to fill with lead. Yet, having the dead weight of an unconscious girl on his broom would definitely make flying through the halls difficult. As he reached the hospital wing, he began to yell.

"Madam Pomfrey! Help! Please, it's Hermione!"

Taking her to the nearest bed, he laid her as gently as he could. Madam Pomfrey flew out of her office. As she cast healing spells, she queried as to the nature of the injuries.

"Well, Mister Malfoy, if you wouldn't mind, I know these wounds are blunt force trauma, but a little better picture might be able to help me save Miss Granger. What happened?"

"To be honest Madam Pomfrey, I wish I knew. I haven't the slightest idea. Maybe the stupid Mudbl..." He coughed slightly at her raised eyebrow. "Maybe Miss Granger fell and hit her head on the way down?"

"Hardly. There are multiple injuries to her skull. How did you carry her?"

"One arm under her knees and one under her shoulders. Why?"

"She has extensive bruising on her arms. See?" Madam Pomfrey pulled back Hermione's sleeves to demonstrate.

"Are you saying somebody did this to her?" he asked, brows knit in frustration.

"Sir, are you making a joke out of this? Look at these!" She commanded before rubbing a bruise healing salve over the ugly marks which were turning blue and a purplish-black. "The sort of strength that made those is something like a *Quidditch player* would have. That, and it was most likely somebody who hates Miss Granger," she added, while wrapping a turban type bandage around Hermione's head. "Somebody like a *pureblood* or a *Slytherin*." She looked pointedly at him.

"WHAT? Are you saying I did this? That's outrageous!" He was near yelling, completely flabbergasted. "*brought* her here to you. I helped save her! Did you notice she wasn't at breakfast? Did you go to check on the bookworm? Did you try to find her? No, no, no! I did, Madam Pomfrey! So before you say one more accus..."

"That's enough, Mister Malfoy," a sharp voice commanded. "Face me."

Draco turned to face his Head of house and godfather, Professor Severus Snape. He felt a cold, though not painful, probing in his head. He opened his mind as he recognized the feeling as he got when his father used Legilimency on him. He focused his thoughts on that morning: breakfast, not seeing Hermione in the Great Hall, wondering where she was, going up to his dorm and hearing a moan from her room, barging in and finding her there. He knew that would be enough for Snape and closed his mind.

Snape nodded curtly. "Draco, go fetch the headmaster please."

Not needing to be told twice, Draco went to inform Albus of what had happened.

Severus looked at the girl on the bed. "Poppy, can she be awoken?" Holding the vial Madam Pomfrey gave him, he administered it to the girl. Opening her eyes, Hermione looked confused and frightened.

"Would it be safe...?" he asked Madam Pomfrey. When she nodded, he bent to the girl.

"Miss Granger, will you allow me to perform *Legilimency* on you?"

Shaking, she nodded her approval and he began. He saw her waking up in a flimsy nightdress, a voice, muffled, calling through the door. Severus watched as she opened the door and saw black. He tried again, going back a little in her memory and playing through them again. Each time, her memory went black before he could see her attacker's face. He tried going backwards, but the next thing she remembered after opening the door was waking up here, in the hospital wing. He sighed in frustration.

"She's been Obliviated. While her attacker was not the young Mister Malfoy, you were correct that who ever did this plays Quidditch or participates in some other strenuous physical activity. Of the people who are granted access to the head girl's rooms, that leaves only Mister Potter or Mister Weasley. Did you happen to notice the pale sheen on Mister Weasley's face at breakfast?" With that, he left without another word to Hermione.

As he turned out of the hospital wing, Severus braced himself against the wall. *Who the hell had done this to her?* They would pay dearly for hurting his girl like this. *The girl*, he corrected himself. Not his girl. He shook his head to clear that traitorous thought from his head. Gods, he needed a firewhisky.

Thanks so much to RobisonRocket for all her genius work on this. Lord knows what I'd do without her!

Chapter 3

Chapter 3 of 8

Ron realizes recognition ?round rascal reactions receives reprimanding

"Mr. Potter, Mr. Weasley, you will see me after class," Snape snarled.

The two boys looked at each other. Ron had fear in his eyes while Harry was confused. Why would Snape want to see them? It had been years since they took anything from his private stores—what could the Potions master want?

As the other students fled the dank classroom, Harry and Ron approached Professor Snape's desk.

"Sir?"

"Ah, yes. I trust you are aware of Miss Granger's condition?"

"Well, sir," Harry started, "we don't know too many details, but Professor McGonagall said that she's resting in the hospital wing. What happened, sir?"

"Funny, you say that as though I need to inform you of your own deeds."

Ron looked pale, and his hands began to tremble slightly.

"My own deeds? What do you mean? Are you insinuating that I hurt her somehow?" Harry's voice rose in anger and disbelief. "She's one of my best friends! I would never hurt Hermione!"

"Well then, Mr. Potter," replied Snape, "you won't mind allowing me to use Legilimency?"

"Of course not, Professor," Harry said as he looked Severus straight in the eyes, "go right ahead."

As Snape probed Harry's memories, he remembered that he had trained the boy in Occlumency. Potter could easily be hiding that morning's events from him. He groaned slightly in frustration. However, there was no lapse of time or missing bits to be found. Harry hid nothing: waking up, relaxing in the common room, getting his books ready for the day, but something was missing: Ronald Weasley. Where was Weasley? Weren't he and Potter inseparable? It was then that Snape knew who Miss Granger's attacker was.

Looking up sharply from Harry's eyes, Severus all but yelled, "Mr. Weasley, you will come to the headmaster's office with me immediately! Mr. Potter, you may go." Snape gave a cold, hard stare to Ron. *The boy will pay dearly for hurting her*, he angrily thought. *How could he do this to such a beautiful, intelligent, innocent girl? Sweet Circe, if I had a witch like Hermione in my life, I would never hurt her in any manner!* He had to get these thoughts out of his head! *No! No, she is a student; there is nothing special about her. I have no feelings for the girl!* Deep down, however, his soul knew it wasn't true.

Grasping Ron by the arm, Snape dragged him roughly to Albus Dumbledore's office. Ron tried to hide his fear and guilt as they approached the stone gargoyle outside the headmaster's office, but his emotions were too powerful. Before Albus could even offer a lemon drop, Ron rushed though a garbled confession of the whole story. Snape smiled softly to himself, as he knew justice would be served.

It wasn't until Albus said his name that Severus realized Ron had left. Snape had been too busy thinking of all possible poisons that would inflict as much pain as possible on the boy. His head snapped up.

"Yes, sir?"

"I would like you to keep an eye on Miss Granger. I noticed you let your mind wander during my discussion with Mr. Weasley. I don't blame you—one student hurting another is not a pleasant topic. Just so we know you understand, the head girl's rooms have now been re-warded. Only staff and Miss Granger are allowed in. While Mr. Weasley is going to remain schooling here, he is to have no contact with Miss Granger outside of class. He also will be seeing her shortly to explain what he did to her this morning. I will ask you to please keep an eye on her and to go to the hospital wing now. She may need someone to help her cope with this shock."

"Headmaster," Severus interjected, "I am not a babysitter—I am a Potions master! It is not in my contract to hold Miss Granger's hand when things do not go her way!"

Albus' voice took on a sharp tone. "Severus Snape. While your contract does not say to hold her hand, it does say that you will protect the students from all harm. That includes psychological trauma. Now then..." He motioned at the door.

Severus sighed. "Sir, I hope you know what you're doing." He turned and left for the infirmary. *How dare he! What is that old man up to?* Did Dumbledore know the inner battle he was fighting? The emotions he was so desperately trying to repress?

Back in his office, Albus Dumbledore shook his head. "Oh, Fawkes," he commented to the beautiful red-gold bird beside him, "as tragic as these events are, it may be just what those two need to realize their kismet." With that, he popped a lemon drop into his mouth.

Special thanks to my beta, RobisonRocket! Gods, she's brilliant! Don't know how I'd do it without her.

Chapter 4

Chapter 4 of 8

Welcomed wistful wishes wander widely with wondrous wisdom

Ron sat miserably in the chair next to Hermione's bed. Her eyes looked at him, sparkling innocently and full of confusion. *How am I going to tell her I did that?* Ron wondered. *I could always tell her I was under the Imperius Curse!* He chuckled nervously and took a deep breath.

"Hermione, love," his voice trembled, "there's something you should know."

Hermione's brow furrowed. "What is it, Ron?" She tried to imagine things he could say next: *Voldemort's back from beyond, Draco joined S.P.E.W., Muggle dentists proclaimed pumpkin juice bad for the teeth, Snape wears silk boxers?* Whoa. *Silk boxers?* Hermione tried to keep her eyes and mind in the present, not fantasizing about Severus' undergarments. "What happened?"

"Well, you and I, we, um, had a sort of, uh, disagreement thi..." Ron's voice faltered as he saw the dark, shadowy figure looming beside Hermione's bed. "Professor Snape?"

Hermione turned, not knowing how to display her pleasure at his presence. Thankfully, it was Severus who spoke first.

"I believe you were *confessing* something just now, Mr. Weasley?"

Ron became indignant and stood up from his chair. "I was not! Hermione and I were discussing something!"

"Hmm. Discussing? Is that a discussion such as the one you two had this morning?" Snape conjured himself a chair and took a seat near Hermione's head and took her hand. When she recoiled, in obvious alarm, he tried to soothe her fears by informing her that Dumbledore had ordered it. "The headmaster wishes me to 'hold your hand' through this ordeal, Miss Granger." Although he knew Albus had clearly stated he had to do no such thing, Severus liked the feeling of being her protector. He wanted to be the one to hold her and comfort her. "Mr. Weasley?"

Ron's jaw had dropped as he stared, awestruck, at the woman he knew was his soon-to-be ex-girlfriend and their hated Potion's master. There she was, content as a kneazle, holding his hand. Who knew what potions and poisons had been made with those filthy, worn hands? Ron shuddered at the thought of getting on Snape's bad side. With sudden realization, he gulped. *Oh shite, I am on Snape's bad side!* When he noticed all eyes were on him, Ron exhaled sharply and began. He tried to sugar-coat the story as much as possible, but damn Snape kept being so bloody explicit!

By the time the second confession of the day was over, Ron had fled the hospital wing, Hermione was in tears, and Severus was stuck holding her as her shoulders shook uncontrollably. She felt so good in his arms—so right. She was his student, yes, but she was so much more of a woman than a girl. Right now, all Severus wanted to do was to hold this beautiful witch in his arms and comfort her. He had a feeling he would pay dearly, but his body had a mind all its own. Emotions took over the usually collected Potions master; his secret love for the girl made his control buckle.

"Shh. Shh. It's going to be alright. Calm down. Shhh. I've got you. It's ok, dear." He rocked her against him, sitting on the hospital bed. Kissing her forehead lightly, he stroked her hair back from her face. He was surprised to find that it was smooth and silky, nowhere near the bushy mess she'd sported the first years of school. He looked down at her horror-struck face. "What's wrong? Hermione, what is it?" He lifted her chin to gaze into her honey-brown eyes. She swiped his hand away.

"*Professor Snape, did you just kiss me?* she asked incredulously. Her hands sat on her hips, waiting for him to try to deny his actions.

He coughed. "Miss Granger, I was simply looking out for your best interests and providing mental support. Please do not take my actions as harassment." His onyx eyes pleaded silently with her brown ones, that she might understand his actions.

"It's... all right," she said, hesitating, "I don't mind." She sniffled as she tucked a stray lock from his eyes. "Thank you... Severus."

"You're welcome... Hermione." He kissed her once more on her forehead and then left her to sleep for the rest of the day.

As he headed back down to the dungeons, Severus didn't know whether to laugh or cry. He was so happy, happier than he could ever remember being. All the joy in the cosmos was his because of this one witch. A pang of sadness hit him, though, like a dagger of ice through his heart.

She was a student—a beautiful, intelligent, skilled, and sensible student. She wouldn't throw her life away for some old dungeon bat of a Potions master.

The way she had looked at him though, the silent understanding they had reached...

Oh, who was he kidding? She was just being polite. He sighed and began to prepare for his next class. For the entire class period, however, he couldn't shake those beautiful rich brown eyes from his mind.

Hermione Granger slept peacefully up in the hospital wing. She doubted the dreams she had came from the Calming Draught she took. She knew it was because of him. The way he held her, kissed her, whispered to her. She moaned slightly in her sleep, reveling in the memory. Her mind began to fantasize...

He held her to him tightly, his strong arms wrapped around her. His kisses caressed her lips, her cheek, her throat, her collarbone. His hands, strong yet gentle, ran up and down her body. He picked her up, cradling her as though she were a child, but honoring the woman that she was.

"Relax, Hermione," he purred to her as he laid her on a bed.

He lay down next to her and stroked her cheek. One hand cupped her breast lovingly, and he pulled back the collar of her shirt to kiss her décolleté. He used his wand to remove her blouse and her bra. His mouth found her nipple, and he teased it with tiny nips. His left hand caressed her other breast, and he kneaded the hardening nub with his thumb and forefinger.

His mouth returned to her throat, and his free hand crept down to her knickers. He slipped his hand inside, feeling her heat radiating around it. His fingers toyed with her clit, rubbing it gently, as his left hand continued it's praising of her rounded breast. Then, two of his fingers slipped between her wet folds..."

Hermione woke up with a gasp. She wasn't with Severus at all—she was still, disappointedly, in the hospital wing. She gave a sigh of frustration. "Someday, Severus, someday."

Thanks very much to RobisonRocket, my beta. Without her, I'd be... well, I'd be writing work so bad, people would call it unintentional siccic! lol.

Chapter 5

Chapter 5 of 8

Dastardly devilish deeds deserve definite discomfort

Hermione woke up to the insistent calling of Madam Pomfrey's voice.

"Hermione, dear, wake up. Hermione..."

Hermione stretched and yawned. She was just having the loveliest dream about a tall, dark, and devilishly handsome man.

"What is it, Madam Pomfrey?" *Why'd you have to go and wake me up from such a wonderful dream? If you only knew...*

"It's about supper time, and as far as I can tell, you're free to leave the hospital wing."

Hermione smiled to her and slowly got up, checking herself for any sore muscles. The only thing that she could find wrong was a sore spot on the back of her head. She would be eternally grateful to the school's mediwitch for all the help she had provided through the years. *Especially that bit with my teeth*, Hermione mused to herself.

"Thank you, ma'am," she called to the matron as she exited the infirmary.

As Hermione approached the Great Hall, the events of that morning came flooding back to her full force. How was she supposed to face Ron after that? She shook her head, no; the best option was to retire to her room. *I'm not really that hungry anyways, plus I still have some chocolates left over from Honeydukes if worse comes to worse*. Sighing, she headed up to her room.

Lying on her back upon her four-poster bed, Hermione thought about what had happened. Ron, her love, Ronald Bilius Weasley *How could he do this to anyone? How could he do this to me?* Hermione thought bitterly. *Now, now*, her inner voice chided, *don't go making yourself a victim. It's not like he raped you or really hurt you. Think of all those poor witches who those sorts of things happen to. Count your blessings, Hermione*.

Hermione felt restless. Rising, she began to pace.

You shouldn't have let him in without your wand, silly girl!

I didn't know he would do anything. He's my boyfriend!

Was your boyfriend, silly chit. Besides, he's got a prick, what do you expect?

Not all wizards think with their cocks...

Very few of them are truly virtuous though. You can't expect him to have not made some move, you've been leading him on for ages, making him think you like him.

I do like him! Well, did. I just wasn't ready for that sort of... involvement.

If you liked him, wouldn't you have done something about it?

A knock at the door caused her to jump a meter in the air.

"Who is it?" she called warily as she reached for her trusty wand, ready to hex if it were Ron outside, daring to try anything again.

"Just me, Harry. Hermione, I didn't see you in the Great Hall, so I've brought you some dinner. I know what happened."

Hermione flung open the door. "Harry. It's good to see you."

"Can I come in?" he asked, offering her the bountiful tray of food.

"Actually, no...the only persons allowed in are the professors and I. Don't want another..." She struggled to find the right words. "Another incident."

"It's alright. I understand completely." He led the way down the stairs and placed the tray on the coffee table in front of the fire.

"How was dinner?" Hermione asked, trying to shake off her thoughts of why she wasn't at dinner with everyone else.

"Well, not so brilliant. Ginny's furious with me," Harry answered.

"Oh dear! Why's that?" she asked as she buttered a roll.

"Because Ron's on his way to the hospital wing." He shrugged simply. "I sent him up there a few minutes ago."

"What did you do, Harry? Oh, Professor McGonagall must be furious with you!"

"No, no. It's all right. I think she actually smiled at me after I punched him. His nose is broken, at best. I just got so angry after what happened. We're supposed to be like the three musketeers, Hermione. One musketeer isn't supposed to attack another. He deserved more than just a warning, so I decked him one on your behalf."

Hermione tried not to smile too broadly. "Thanks."

Harry grinned at her over the pumpkin pastry he brought up and sat with her while she ate the rest of the meal, contently, in silence.

"This is unacceptable!" Severus Snape's voice roared and reverberated inside the Headmaster's cluttered office. *'Stay away from her? That's it?'*

"Severus, I understand that you're angry, but please try to relax. There's no grievous harm done. Miss Granger seems to be handling it quite fairly; I don't see why you

can't as well. Minerva and I think this is an appropriate way to handle the situation"

"Albus. Minerva couldn't even be present for the meeting, she was so distraught. If this thing had such an effect on Minerva, just imagine what it's doing to Miss Granger. You know as well as I that this sort of thing could have severe psychological effects that we might not see right now. Even a Muggle would know that!"

Dumbledore shot his Potions master a warning glance.

"It's true," Snape grumbled.

Albus waved his hand as though clearing smoke. "Nevertheless, Severus, it seems that for now, the most we can do is hope for things to work themselves out."

Professor Snape glared at the aged wizard. Biting his tongue, he turned sharply and departed the Headmaster's office, his jet-black robes billowing behind him.

The Headmaster was a bumbling old fool, Snape decided. Ronald Weasley did not deserve the pity and sympathy that Albus had bestowed upon him. After seeing first hand what an abusive relationship could do to a household, Severus strongly felt such things were far too serious for a slap on the wrist. If Dumbledore's Gryffindor ethics were preventing him from administering a fair punishment, then it was far past the time where Slytherin tactics needed to be employed.

Minerva McGonagall sat in her favorite chair in her study, facing her fireplace. She stirred her tea, miserating about the behaviour of her students. She hadn't even been able to gain enough composure to face Ronald in Albus' office and instead had communicated her rule, as both students' Head of House, via school owls. While she agreed that Ron needed to finish his schooling, she wondered if they had made the right decision on his punishment. She hoped that perhaps distance away from his friends was what Ronald needed to learn from his errors. As she watched the fire, the flames licked at the logs, burning brightly. She gave a small shudder and turned away in disgust. *That's what Mister Weasley did to Miss Granger this morning. Licking her, devouring her, destroying her. My poor, dear Hermione, star student, bright, promising young witch.* It was a fate to be bemoaned. Minerva hoped Hermione's grades and intellect didn't suffer as a result of the previous events. If they did, Merlin help her, Minerva McGonagall swore to change into her Animagus, a silver tabby, and personally scratch Mister Weasley's bollocks to the point where there was no hope of repair. *See if you take after your father there!* She smiled slightly to herself, pleased with her decision. *I wonder if castration of an assaulting bastard counts as Azkaban material. Doubtful. What's fair is fair.* Still, Deputy Headmistress McGonagall knew that as a head member of the faculty at Hogwarts, she was in no position to ever do such a thing. *It would be nice though,* she mused. She had been so pleased when young Mr. Potter had punched Ronald in the nose at dinner. He had it coming, and she couldn't help but to smile at Harry. He's always known right from wrong, even if he never had a proper father to teach it to him. Minerva rose with a soft sigh and began readying her papers for tomorrow's classes. All they could do, she reasoned, was hope for the best.

Ron sat bitterly in the hospital wing as Madam Pomfrey fixed his nose. Harry was supposed to be his best friend! Who stood by him year after year, sat by him when he awoke screaming from countless nightmares, crammed for the O.W.L. exams in the wee hours of the morning, and fought right by his side during the final battle? Harry was supposed to be on his side, not Hermione's! *This just isn't fair. I always get the short stick of things. I don't have Harry's eyes or famous scar; I don't have Hermione's brains or beauty. What have I got? More freckles than pages in Hogwarts: A History and luck with chess. I've got nothing that can make Hermione love me. It's not like Mum and Dad are the bloody Malfoys... they can't just pay her like Lucius and Narcissa bribe Pansy Parkinson to put up with Draco. I'm not sweet like Neville. I'm not famous like Harry. I've got nothing to make her love me, nothing to bind her to me. Bind... bind... bi...*

"That's it!" he exclaimed suddenly, causing Poppy to jump slightly in alarm.

"What's it, Mister Weasley?" she asked, eyeing him suspiciously. What was this boy up to?

"Erm... nothing, nothing, Madam Pomfrey. Sorry." He sank back down onto the cot slowly.

Nothing that you need to know about. However, I've discovered how to make Hermione love me for the rest of time. I'm not sure how I'll do it, but I've found a way to bind her so she will never leave me. She will be mine and mine alone! At that thought, Ronald Weasley began to plot on how exactly he would make Hermione Granger be his, without question, for all eternity.

Lots of thanks to RobisonRocket, beta extraordinaire!

Chapter 6

Chapter 6 of 8

Severus serves some simple salutes simultaneously stirring smooth sapor

While Ronald Weasley wasn't the loudest Mandrake in the bunch, he came up with a few good shrieks now and then. His most recent discovery, he thought, was by far his greatest. He had lain awake all night, pondering how to make Hermione be his and his alone. Now, he decided, he had created the perfect plan. It wouldn't be easy, no, and it would take time, oh, yes, but it would work. He had thought about all the couples he knew: his parents, the late Potters, the Grangers, the Longbottoms, the Patils, even the Malfoys. They all had one thing in common, some more than others. It was exactly that thing, that thing that tied the husband and wife together, that he would pursue with Hermione. She wouldn't dare leave him after that.

Harry groaned and stretched out on the couch of the head's common room as a nudging urged him awake.

"Potter, what in the blazes are you doing here?" The steel grey eyes and platinum blonde hair of Draco Malfoy were unmistakable.

"Oh, erm..." Harry didn't quite know how to answer that question without giving away something that should be kept quiet. "Hermione and I were just studying... ah... Arithmancy."

"Harry," Draco said with a bemused smile on his face, "you're not taking Arithmancy this year. Nice try. Look, I already know what happened. Hell, the whole school

probably knows by now. Doesn't explain what you're doing sleeping on the couch of my dormitory."

"Draco, this isn't your dormitory, it's a common room," Harry retorted.

"Minor schematics."

"Draco, you really can be a pain in the arse sometimes, you know that? Anyway, the reason I'm up here is because Hermione wasn't at dinner last night..."

"I noticed," Draco interrupted.

"...so I brought her up some dinner. Happy?" Harry rose off the couch and stretched out his aching limbs. "I must have fallen asleep sometime afterwards."

"You slept on the couch all night?" Harry thought Draco looked a bit concerned, but it was probably just his imagination.

"Not like I had any where else to go. I couldn't go back to my dorm."

"Why not? It is *your* dormitory, Harry."

"Ron's there." Harry looked towards the fireplace and sighed. "He used to be my best mate you know."

"I know." Draco laid his hand on Harry's shoulder. "Crabbe and Goyle were once my right hand men. When they found out that I wouldn't be taking the mark... of Voldemort," he said bravely, "they abandoned me."

"So that's why they're not following you around anymore like you were a naked Veela, huh?" Harry allowed himself a grin.

"Yeah, yeah, that would be it." Draco grinned back. "Guess I'm just not as attractive as I used to be."

"I really doubt that." Harry snorted.

Draco looked him squarely in the eyes. "Excuse me?"

"Everyone knows that *Playwitch* wants you to pose for them, and *Witch Weekly* sells out every time they feature an interview with you. How can you get better proof than that?" *That and I think the way your hair is falling in front of your eye right now is gorgeous, and your lips look absolutely delicious...*

Draco tucked a stray lock behind his ear. "I suppose you're right, Harry. Everyone just wants a piece of the Slytherin dragon."

"Yes, we do," Harry murmured softly.

"What was that?" Draco asked.

"I said, yes, they do," Harry corrected himself. He was dating Ginny. At least, he hoped he was still dating Ginny. After last night though...

"Well, Harry," Draco turned to leave, "next time you decide to spend the night here, you might want to remember that you're a wizard and conjure yourself up a bed. *Or just come up to mine.*

"Haha. I'll try to remember, thanks, Draco." Harry left for his dormitory, heart pounding, smiling all the way.

Hermione didn't wake until around nine o'clock. She usually awoke about three hours earlier, but last night with Harry had gone on until around midnight. They ate, talked, and he let her cry on his shoulder about everything that had happened. Why couldn't everyone be as nice as Harry was? *Snape*, a voice reminded her, *Snape is nice, Snape is intellectual, and he'd listen to you without trying to do anything you wouldn't want him to. You should talk to Snape, Hermione.*

Talking to Snape was an idea that would frighten most students in first through seventh years. Even some teachers had issues with the brooding Potions master. After the way he had been acting the past few days though, Hermione felt he wasn't as cold and heartless as he had made himself out to be. Somewhere deep underneath that dangerous hippogriff façade he put on, Severus Snape was just a cuddly kneazle waiting to be loved. Hermione giggled a bit to herself. If he ever heard her thinking like that, he'd likely have her in a Jelly-Legs Jinx before she could say *Protego*.

Hermione rummaged around in her trunk until she found some carefully packaged chamomile tea leaves her mother had sent her a few weeks ago. She had been waiting for a special occasion to use them, and this was just it. Grabbing the box, Hermione dashed off to the dungeons to see if a certain tall, dark, and handsome man of mystery cared for a cup of calming tea.

Severus Snape was hunched over a cauldron when he heard a knock at his door.

"Enter," he commanded, hoping his voice would scare off whatever foolish student had dared come to disturb him on a Saturday morning.

"Professor Snape?" a timid voice asked.

"Come in, Miss Granger." *At least it's not a dunderhead* "What can I do for you this dismal morning?"

"Well, sir, I was wondering, if you weren't too busy..." she glanced at the cauldron he was stirring, "perhaps you wouldn't mind sharing a cup of tea?" She looked up at his cold onyx eyes with her warm honey ones, almost begging him not to throw her out. It was obvious something was troubling the young witch.

"Miss Granger, I am in the middle of mixing a complex potion. Now is not the best time for me to have a cup of tea. However, something tells me that you did not just come by to offer me some tea. What is it?" Severus asked patiently.

"Actually, I was hoping I could talk to you about yesterday. You had said Headmaster Dumbledore assigned you to aid me. So, now I'm wondering if you could do so."

"What part of yesterday did you wish to speak about?" *Please not about what foolishness I committed in the hospital wing.*

"Nothing in particular, really. I'm just feeling confused. So much has happened, and I don't know where I stand." Hermione sighed and took the proffered seat.

"Very well. The potion must simmer for a few minutes now, and we can speak during that time."

"What are you making, sir?" Hermione asked inquisitively. "I don't recognize it from any of our textbooks or any journals I've read."

"Miss Granger, I thought you had come here to talk about yesterday. As to the potion, it is none of your concern."

Smells illegal. "Yes, sir." Hermione conjured a pot and cast a heating charm on the water. "Do you like chamomile, sir?"

"Miss Granger, any type of herbal tea is preferable to inhaling the fumes from potions."

Somehow, the way he said it sounded like a skewed joke, Hermione reasoned. Taking his smirk as an indication to continue, she launched into her matter of concern.

"You see, Professor, I don't know how to handle myself. Harry has been quite helpful to sit with and talk to..."

Of course The-Boy-Who-Lived-To-Ruin-Another-Potions-Class was helpful, thought Severus.

"... and Ron and Ginny are keeping distance. Draco has already helped so much... but what about me? I don't know what to do about these thoughts in my mind." She looked at him, her eyes desperate. Her great concern and distress was evident. Severus wondered, though, how hard it could be to figure out. The boy had harmed her; how difficult would it be to just stay away?

"Miss Granger, I fail to see how this situation could be giving you difficulty. Mister Weasley assaulted you. The solution is evident, you should avoid him." Severus took a deep sip of the warm tea.

"I still... I still care about him." Hermione stared down at her cup, cheeks flaming.

"I see."

The two sat there for a few minutes, contemplating.

"Sir?" Hermione ventured.

"Yes, Miss Granger?"

"I think it's been a few minutes." She said, gesturing to the cauldron.

Double, double, toil and trouble, fire burn and cauldron bubble "Yes, indeed it has been." Moving quickly, Severus took the almost-boiling potion off the flame and stirred it once clockwise, once counterclockwise. He continued this pattern for two and twenty strokes before adding another ingredient, which Hermione didn't recognize as a regular potions ingredient. She watched as the entire potion turned transparent.

"Sir, pardon me, but what was that last ingredient you added?"

"That was *sapor velieris*, Miss Granger. You need not concern yourself with it."

Hermione knew better than to test Professor Snape's patience, but she couldn't help wondering just what that mysterious liquid was, or what potion he was making. Curiosity overtook her, and she quickly bid her farewell to Severus and hurried to the library to look for any information she could find about *sapor velieris*.

Severus Snape sighed in his potions lab. He should have known better than to tell her what it was. Now the girl would surely be heading to the library to see just what *sapor velieris* was. *Hermione... Miss Granger,* He mentally corrected himself, *wouldn't make anything dangerous with it anyway.*

Lots of love and thanks to Robison Rocket for her excellent beta skills and her lovely inspiration!

Chapter 7

Chapter 7 of 8

Enter extraordinarily eerie epistles, eccentric elegies of engagement.

Molly Weasley was not overly pleased with her youngest son. He had ruined his relationship with Hermione, his grades were falling steadily, and he did not sound like himself in his letters home. Molly looked over his latest owl.

Dear Mother,

I know you are worried about Hermione

and me, but do not worry... she shall be a

Weasley in due time. You see, dear Mother,

Hermione and I will share something

unbreakable. Can you decipher what it is?

The Gardeners sowed The One.

And in doing, had much fun.

The Dragon from Devil and Self.

Mine future a mischievous elf.

Oh, you need not have fear,

My steadfast mother dear,

Of one thing I am quite sure:

That Weasley will endure.

Your son,

Ronald

Molly shook her head. The boy always did like Divination class, and now here he was, writing like a Seer. Whatever Ron was up to, though, she would trust Albus Dumbledore to maintain control. After all, the man had handled Fred and George quite well with all their pranks. Whatever stunt Ron was planning on pulling, she was certain the headmaster would manage it.

The number of times Harry and Ron turned to Hermione for help was lost to Ronald. He wasn't quite sure how often she helped them focus or reminded them of an upcoming assignment. Now that she wasn't readily available to him, Ron's grades were slipping.

In fact, his Potions grade had fallen so low that he was actually asking Neville Longbottom for help. Neville was of no help... Ron's grade kept falling. In fact, he blew up more than one cauldron before Professor Snape decided to put a stop to his reckless brewing.

"Mister Weasley."

"Yes, sir?" Ron said in clipped tones. His recent habit of insubordination threatened to run through his voice every time he spoke to a teacher, and Ronald knew Severus Snape was not the man to cross.

"You will see me after class to discuss the extent of your cauldron-destroying abilities. I will not tolerate any more emergency runs to the hospital wing on your account. Do you understand?"

"Yes, *sir*," Ron replied, anger beginning to surface. Snape or not, no one had the right to speak to him like that! Still, he sat quietly and waited for class to end.

Ronald Weasley's persona had hardened considerably over the last few weeks. Ever since his *misunderstanding* with Hermione, Ron had been on edge. The littlest thing could set him off. He wasn't paying much attention in class, his homework (when he remembered to do it) was less than satisfactory, and his friends were limited to his sister and Rubeus Hagrid.

Hagrid didn't like what Ron had done, but he knew full well that every person, no matter how vile, needed company. Even Hagrid was starting to get annoyed by Ron's short fuse and common outbursts. He chalked it up to guilt and hormones though. Little did Hagrid know, though, Ron had no guilt whatsoever.

In fact, Ronald was planning to further his conquest. He spent hours upon days upon weeks scheming. It was difficult to concentrate on his plan with all sorts of people interrupting him. Every interruption made him more irate than the last. Some nights, he went to bed early while everyone else was at dinner, just to have some peace and quiet to think about his Hermione. Every night, he had the same thoughts:

She was so beautiful. Her honey eyes were deep brown pools of kindness and love. Her face, although hardened by the war, still held a warm smile for everyone she talked to. Her soft, golden-brown hair, which looked so regal and perfect in the candle-light, fell a few inches below her shoulders. Shoulders that he longed to touch, to caress, to rub. To smooth warm oil over her skin and massage it, just to feel her and make her feel good. To slide his hands all over her person, kneading out the knots that stress had created. To run his fingers farther down her body, that body of a goddess. To follow the path his fingers took with his mouth, his tongue and lips playing at every inch of her supple flesh. He wanted to cup her breasts with his hands while his tongue flicked across her hardened nipples. He imagined tasting her skin as he licked, so sweet and divine. He fantasized about suckling on those beautiful breasts while she ran her hands through his shaggy hair, holding him close. His favorite fantasy of his Hermione, though, was of lying between her legs. He would lay lie there for hours, he decided, not stopping his ministrations until she was satisfied. He wanted so badly to take his tongue and lick her there, in her secret place. He wanted to take his mouth and cover her sensitized nub with it, licking it furiously, sucking on it, and perhaps nipping it oh, so gently. He would dart his tongue about her soft folds, tasting her delectable nectar. Ron wanted to delve his tongue into her, to thrust it like he would his manhood. He wished to do so while rubbing her tiny jewel of pleasure with his hand, listening to her mewling cries of orgasm. He wanted all these things and more. Every night, Ron Weasley fantasized about Hermione Granger, and he promised himself that soon he would have her as his own.

After Potions class had ended, Ron made his way, looking bored as anything, to the front of the room where Professor Snape was waiting. The professor had his typical scowl etched deep into his pale visage. Ron stood before the man, placing his arms akimbo and giving Severus a look of complete disdain. Severus mirrored his expression and began to ream the boy. He scolded him about his lack of caution, his carelessness, warned him about his slipping grades, and then said something completely out of character: "But I'm glad you're doing the work yourself, Mister Weasley."

Ron stood dumbfounded. Had the Greasy Git actually given him a somewhat compliment? Hah. Next thing he knew, the professor would be asking him to tea.

"Come, sit, let's have a spot of tea and discuss how to get your grade up." Ron's jaw dropped, but he snapped it shut to hide his shock. *A spot of tea, what?* Severus led him into his personal office to two plush chairs. Ron sat, slumping down in an effort to show that he was unfazed by Snape's sudden change of heart. As Severus poured the tea, Ron asked, "So, Professor, why do you suddenly want to help?"

"Well, Mister Weasley, I don't like to see any student of mine fail, even if they are from Gryffindor. The grades and work you are displaying simply do not accurately portray my abilities as a teacher. Besides, I cannot tolerate having another cauldron ruined by your efforts."

Snape's explanation satisfied Ron...there was no way the professor would suggest help merely for the student's behalf. He looked at the teacup before him. The steam rose from the cup and swirled as if beckoning Ron to take a taste. He held the cup gingerly and took a cautious sniff. Chamomile. *Hermione*. Holding the cup in one hand, he cast *Specialis Revelio*. Severus cocked an eyebrow at him.

"Checking for poisons, Weasley? I assure you, you'll find none." *Of course you won't find them. You're far too stupid, you clumsy dunderhead.*

Ron took a deep sip of the hot beverage. It filled him with warmth, the same kind he got when he had snuck some firewhisky from Madam Rosmerta.

"Mister Weasley, I propose that you begin seeing a tutor on a weekly basis. Start perhaps at one or two times a week. I suggest a Ravenclaw." Ron started to interrupt, but Severus raised a hand. "I'll see to it that things are managed financially, so you don't need to worry about that. It's not like you can go to Miss Granger to have her do your work for free."

That did it. Ron's face colored deeply. He quickly drained his tea and stood to leave. "If that is all?"

Severus nodded slightly. "Have a good evening, Mister Weasley. I trust you can show yourself out?"

"I can," Ron stated defiantly as he stormed out.

My, my, thought Severus, I seem to have struck a chord with Weasley. Soon enough, though, he'll see what happens when you mess with another man's witch. Not that she's my witch, of course. His fingers played idly with the small vial in his pocket, the contents of which had just found their way into Ron's tea.

Hermione Granger sat in front of the fire in the Head's common room, awaiting her supper. She hated how she had to stay in her rooms for meals just because of having to keep distance from Ron. She hated how Ginny had turned from being one of her best friends to not even speaking to Hermione. She hated how different her life had become. She hated how she missed Ron. She was supposed to hate him, so why was she missing his friendship? She tried to think about every mean and hurtful thing he had said or done to her, but happy memories kept creeping into her thoughts. She sighed.

"Harry, is that you?" Hermione called when she heard the painting swing open.

"No, guess again... Mione."

Loads of gratitude go to RobisonRocket for her amazing beta work!

Chapter 8

Chapter 8 of 8

Potentially potent potions provide presumptuous participants.

"Draco! Oh Merlin, you gave me such a fright!" Hermione placed a hand on her chest.

"Why? What's wrong?" Draco looked legitimately confused.

"Ron always called me that, and when you said you weren't Harry..." Her voice broke off. "I thought it was Ron coming back again."

Draco moved to hug the girl. "I'm sorry, I didn't mean to frighten you, Hermione."

"It's alright. I'm not going to be some weak little witch who goes crying at the sight of a spider." Her eyes widened a bit "A spider! Oh, Ron hated spiders; he'd always shriek and cry... his teddy bear... the twins... oh, Ron!" And with that, Hermione allowed the few tears she had been holding back to fall.

He guided her over to the couch in front of the fireplace and cast *Incendio*. He put one arm around her shoulders and leaned his head against hers. She flinched a bit, but allowed him to hold her.

"I'm sorry," she whispered.

"Why?"

"For doing this to you. I'm sure you'd rather be playing Quidditch, or wizards chess or something like that." Hermione wiped her eyes with the palms of her hands.

Draco turned her to face him. "There is nothing I'd rather do right now than sit here with you and listen."

They sat for several minutes in silence, staring at the flames.

"I... I still care for him. Even after that, I still love him. Is that so wrong of me?" Hermione said softly.

"Not at all. I understand how you would. I don't know what you see in him, but I understand. Now, with a dashing young man such as myself, I could understand your undying attraction," Draco said with mock seriousness.

Hermione sighed overdramatically. "It would be useless though, for me to be madly in love with you, seeing as I'm not a boy."

Draco looked at her in shock, wide-eyed. "What? Where did you hear that?"

"Oh, I didn't hear it anywhere. It's just so obvious."

"It is? But, I don't do anything that would suggest it, do I?" He looked worried.

"Oh, Draco, it's not obvious like *that*. It's clear, at least to me, that you and Harry, well... there's an obvious connection between you two. I don't have to study that ridiculous excuse for a class, Divination, to see it. You and Harry are so much closer than you and Pansy ever were, and, well, Harry and Ginny just... I think they were meant to stay as friends."

"Oh," was all he could say.

"Come off it, Draco, I'm not going to tell anyone."

"You promise? I'm as good as dead socially if anyone were to find out." He brought his hand to his mouth and was about to start on his fingernails, but held out his hand, looking at the perfectly manicured nails and decided against it.

Hermione laughed. "Your secret is safe with me."

"It's good to see you laugh again. Go get some sleep, okay?" Draco smiled at her as she stood up and stretched.

She exhaled sharply. "Arg! Double Potions first class tomorrow morning!" She shot him a pointed look "Maybe you and Harry should work together." Leaving him with that thought, she headed up the stairs to her room.

When she closed the door, she summoned Dobby.

"Dobby?"

He appeared with a loud pop.

"Yes, Miss Granger, how may Dobby serve the friend of Harry Potter?" He looked as though he were about to burst in anticipation of fulfilling her every request.

"Dobby, would you be so kind as to go fetch a book for me from the library?"

"Oh, yes, anything for a friend of Harry Potter! Dobby would be honored to serve Miss Hermione. What book shall Dobby get for Miss?"

"I'm looking for any book with *sapor velieris* in it."

"Yes, Miss, right away, Miss. Dobby will return!" He snapped his fingers.

It took a surprisingly rather long amount of time for Dobby to return with a few books. In fact, all he had were two. One was *Moste Potente Potions* and the other was *A Healer's Bedside Guide*.

"Only two?" She wasn't really expecting much more, but she had been hoping. The fewer books something was mentioned in, the more dangerous it probably was. She, Harry, and Ron had learned that when they found almost no books regarding Horcuxes in the library.

"Dobby is sorry, Miss Hermione! Dobby could not find more. Dobby has upset a friend of Harry Potter!" Dobby looked terribly distressed and immediately ran to her dresser and began banging his head against it.

She knelt on the floor beside him. "Dobby, please! Stop. There's no need to harm yourself. You have helped me very much, thank you."

Dobby smiled a huge grin. Hermione tried not to grimace. As the daughter of dentists, she couldn't help but think every person, or being, she met needed dental work. Especially house-elves.

"Will Miss Hermione be wanting any foods from the kitchen? Dobby is happy to go get this for Miss Hermione!"

"Hermione smiled and shook her head softly. "No, Dobby, thank you. This is all for tonight."

Dobby nodded and, with a snap, vanished.

Hermione picked up the two books he had rather unceremoniously dropped in his rush to punish himself and took them to her bed. She put them down and changed quickly into her nightclothes, eager to find out just what Professor Snape had made. There was nothing like studying to clear one's mind of thoughts of boys. She slid under the covers and opened *A Healer's Bedside Guide*. Flipping through, she found the potion. Snape had been putting two potions together, but why? She read further,

Sapor Velieris is a rather complex potion, often mistaken for a single ingredient, which can be added to most any other potion, provided the second is not boiling. If it is, the Sapor Velieris will not be effective. Only a few drops are needed. This potion will make any other potion tasteless and clear. It is especially helpful in cases such as administering Skele-Gro, due to its bitter taste, or Wolfsbane. Caution must be used to ensure the finished product is not mistaken for water, and one must always clearly label what the original potion is, so as not to confuse it. The St. Mungo's apothecary is sure to carry it, as will most major Wizarding hospitals.

Why was Snape using that? Maybe Madam Pomfrey had requested it? Hermione didn't think that was likely though. She remembered that when she had seen the original potion and smelled it, it wasn't anything she could identify from the hospital wing. She turned to *Moste Potente Potions*. What she found there explained Snape's behavior.

Sapor Velieris, also known as the "Unseen Death", is very useful in poisoning one's enemy. It will make any poison clear, tasteless, and undetectable. (This potion is also very useful when mixed with Polyjuice, a potion known to be nauseating.) No trace of Sapor Velieris can be found in the body after six hours. By this time, you should be able to cover your tracks and get an alibi in place. Do not use in boiling potions. Make sure you know where the poison is at all times as not to confuse it with your own drink. If you don't have a trustworthy Potions master on hand, you can use the Imperious on a Healer and have them get it from the apothecary at St. Mungo's or any other medical facility. For instructions on making the potion, see below. For ideas of poisons to use, refer to page 687.

Hermione was confused. Who would Severus... no, Professor Snape. Who would Professor Snape want to poison? Voldemort was gone, nobody was after the professor, and he wasn't mad at anyone she knew of. Well, except Ron, but Dumbledore had already taken care of that and surely wouldn't allow Snape to do anything. She was touched though, by how much Snape seemed to want to protect her. That was his duty as a teacher though, to protect his students. She fell asleep mulling over whom else Snape could possibly want to poison.

When Ron awoke the next morning, he didn't realize anything out of the ordinary. He was in his dorm, Neville was draped half out of bed on one side of him while Seamus snored loudly on his other side, and as he had been every morning since fourth year, Ron was greeted at attention. There were no boils popping up all over him, he felt perfectly fine, and he wasn't sprouting whiskers or the like. Snape must not have put anything in his tea after all. Ron sighed and cast a silencing charm, closed his drapes, and got to work on his morning situation. Every time he did this, there was only one face he'd see: his 'Mione. As he worked himself to a climax, all he could imagine was her, and it was always her name that he cried out.

Today, though, his 'Mione didn't seem to be satisfying him. He had already rebounded from his first orgasm and was ready for another. He imagined her naked, moaning his name, pleasing him, being his forever, and with a grunt, came again. Ron stared down at his manhood in shock. He was still hard! His hands were so tired, but there was no way he could go to class like this! He was so sore, there was no way he could go another round. He figured he might well skip class that day, but then he remembered his Transfiguration test second period. And he couldn't very well skip Double Potions with Snape being so mad at him. But how was he supposed to go to class with this thing? Yet, if he didn't go to class, he'd never see his 'Mione, even if they now sat on separate sides of the classroom.

Peeking his head out the curtains, he saw the other boys were beginning to get up and ready for the day. None of them seemed to have the same problem he did. He couldn't get out of bed though, not like this! Pulling his pajama bottoms up, Ron tried desperately to remember the Concealing Charm. His 'Mione was so good with charms, and he wished she were there to help him. Thinking about her only made his problem worse.

He waited until the other boys had left for breakfast then slipped out of bed and dressed hastily. Ron was glad they got to wear robes; otherwise, his persistent sign of arousal would be humiliating. The soft fabric of his boxers made him shiver with pleasure. Every little touch brought him to a higher plateau. He had to find something to get his mind off his swollen member and his craving for touch.

Ron came down to breakfast, trying to keep himself covered with his robes and his books. He sat gingerly, hating the way it compressed him. Harry leaned over.

"Ron, I'm still angry with you for what you did. It was inexcusable. Are you okay though? You don't look so good."

When Ron failed to answer, not knowing what to say, Harry thought he knew.

"It's because of her, isn't it? You feel guilty and horrible about what you did. Well you know what? I'm glad you feel that way. Maybe you'll finally learn your lesson."

Harry left, and Ron couldn't do anything about it. There was no way he was getting up in front of all these people. He ate slowly, waiting for everyone else to leave. When they had, he finally started heading to Potions.

Snape was pleased, to say the least. The Weasley boy was in a state of obvious discomfort. If Snape were the type to, he would have laughed, but he wasn't. At least not in front of students, and Miss Granger had just slammed the door open.

"Can I help you, Miss Granger?" he asked, trying not to sound overly guilty.

"Yes, you bloody well can! Who is it, *Professor* Snape?" She stood akimbo, looking very upset.

Snape knew full well not to trifle with an angry witch, yet he couldn't help pushing her.

"Who is what, Miss Granger? Whatever do you mean?" He made a look of utter surprise.

"The *Sapor Velieris* Professor. Who was it for? What did you mix it with?" she demanded.

He pretended to come to a realization. "Oh, that..."

"Yes, that!" She took a step towards him.

"I felt a need to take someone's recent punishment, or lack thereof, into my own hands," he said with a smirk.

She was just about to retaliate when a flood of other students came in.

"I don't need you poisoning people on my behalf. Let me fight my own damn battles, *Severus*," she hissed and turned on her heel to take her seat.

She thinks I've poisoned him? She better not go to the Headmaster with this. Quick, how to deal with this. Then, he got an idea of how to subtly tell her what happened.

"You will not need your books today," he informed the class. Several puzzled faces looked up at him, while others relaxed, thinking this meant no brewing. "Instead, we will be brewing a potion often suggested to older wizards who wish to... regain their youth."

The class looked at him. "We're making a de-aging potion, Sir?" the insufferable Pansy Parkinson asked loudly.

"Five points from Slytherin for speaking out of turn, Miss Parkinson." The entire class stared at him in disbelief. ~~Snape~~ never took points from his own house!

"We are not making a de-aging potion. We are making a virility potion."

Hermione raised her hand.

"Yes, Miss Granger?"

"Sir, aren't we supposed to be continuing the section on healing potions? Why are we making this?"

Because I want you to know what I did to Mister Weasley. "Because, Miss Granger, St. Mungo's is out and you all should be aware of it, if you ever seem to fall into the unfortunate curse of marriage. For if you know the potion, you can surely make it's opposite. Now then, the *Aevitas Opscaen* is a potion that causes the drinker to enter a constant state of arousal." Severus heard a few of the students titter at the last word. "While the drinker is not only physically aroused, they are also highly sensitive to any contact to their erogenous zones. While under the effects of *Aevitas Opscaen*, the user will find that while self-pleasure can be gratifying, the potion will not wear off until twenty-four hours have passed." *Or until they actually have intercourse, but no reason to tell them that part.* "This potion has long been used in arranged marriages to ensure an heir and compatibility in the boudoir."

He tapped the board, and instructions appeared. "Get started. All the necessary ingredients are in the storage room."

When Ron Weasley didn't get up to get ingredients, Snape came over to him.

"Something wrong, Mister Weasley?" he asked with false concern.

"You bastard," was all Ron could say.

"No need to bring lineage into this. Get to work."

As they worked, Snape could hear several pairs of students daring each other to try it.

"If I see any of you even attempt to take a taste, you will be out of this classroom faster than you can say 'but Professor', do you understand me?"

"Yes, Professor," they all replied.

Severus made his way over to where Hermione was looking at the potion with a sense of recognition.

"Smell familiar, Miss Granger?"

She turned to him. "You didn't. Oh, please tell me you didn't!"

"Didn't do what?" he asked, feigning innocence.

"You idiot. You're such a bloody idiot. Damn you, Snape, damn you to hell," she said only loud enough for him to hear.

She left Neville to the potion and stomped out of the room, banging the door hard behind her.

"Miss Granger!" He exited the classroom to find her.

She was waiting right outside his door, arms crossed, fuming.

"You. Are. An. Idiot," she said vehemently.

"What is wrong with you? It's a harmless little potion that will only embarrass him. Nothing compared to having one's pants off while hanging upside down."

"You and I know full well that twenty-four hours isn't the only way to get rid of it. I should have recognized it when I saw you brewing it before."

"You've had this? Used it?" He looked at her strangely.

"Books," she said by way of explanation.

"Of course." Leave it to the Gryffindor brains to study everything about everything. The girl really should have been in Ravenclaw.

"This is Ron we're talking about. As if he isn't wound up on hormones enough as is? You know he's going to be looking everywhere for a shag tonight. Who the hell do you think he's going to try to find first? I thought you were supposed to protect me!" Tears flowed evenly as she turned and fled for her rooms.

It will be alright, Severus his inner mantra began, *Weasley isn't foolish enough to try something else. At least I hope not*

To say the least, Ron's Transfiguration test went miserably. He couldn't concentrate on anything except sex and how badly he wanted it, and how much he wanted to kill Snape. He ached, he craved, and he squirmed. He needed sex, and he needed it now. There was no way he could wait the full twenty-four hours. He needed Hermione. He needed His 'Mione; he needed her hot, wet flesh around him. He needed her writhing underneath him. Oh, Circe, he just made it worse thinking like that. He couldn't take it any longer. He hadn't seen her all day since Potions, and now he needed her. Screw Dumbledore's 'stay away' rule. He needed this.

After lunch Ron went to find Ginny.

"Ginny, I need you to take these to Draco. Tell him to give them to Hermione. Say they're from you, and you want to apologize and have your friend back." He handed her a box of chocolates.

"Are these the Amortentia ones?"

"With a hint, okay, a good dousing, of lust." He winked.

Oh, Ron, you're so Slytherin. I'll go do that right now."

Ron went to take a bath. He needed to be inside warm and wet and tight, and he supposed a hot bath and his hand would have to settle for now.

"Ginny, I don't know how much Hermione wants to see you right now. I'll give her the chocolates though." Draco leaned against the picture frame to their room, holding the box.

"Thank you, Draco. Please, tell her to read the card. It tells her how sorry I am for my brother being a prat."

"Yeah, will do," Draco muttered as he stepped back inside.

He took them up to her and knocked on the door to her room.

"Hermione? Ginny brought something by for you."

She opened the door slowly and peeked her head out of it. "What is it?"

"Chocolates and a note. She said she's very sorry about what a prat Ron has been and that she's sorry for not siding with you sooner. Anyways, I've got to go patrol. Will you be okay here by yourself?" he asked her, concerned.

"Yeah, only you, the professors, and I can get in here. All's safe, thanks, Draco. Have fun patrolling!" She laughed half-heartedly.

"I'm going to tell Harry to stop by later and check on you. I'll give him the password to get in to our common room, okay? Stay in here."

"Okay, thanks, Draco." She closed her door.

Hermione put the chocolates on her desk and opened the card that had come with it.

Hermione, I really am sorry about how Ron has been acting. I know how much you love chocolates, and even though they won't fix this, maybe they can help you to forgive me? I should have realized just what happened between you guys and understood how it wasn't your fault. I'm sorry.

Love,

Ginny

Hermione smiled a bit. Yes, she did love chocolates, and as soon as she had finished reading the card, the box seemed to be calling to her, making her want to taste the chocolates within. She opened it and began to eat them, as if in a trance. They were so good, and she couldn't stop. They tasted of chocolate, of cinnamon, of vanilla, of happiness, of goodness, and love. There was so much love. She loved the box, she loved her room, and she loved her door. She loved her bed, she loved her books, she loved her everything. Ron. She loved her Ron. She needed her Ron. Warmth swept through her body, and aching filled her core as she realized how much she needed him and how much she wanted him. She had to find him.

Ron waited by the entrance to the Head's common room. Undoubtedly Hermione would be coming out soon, wet and aching and madly in love with him. The potions in the chocolates didn't act for very long, so he had to get her as soon as he could.

He saw her leave and close the painting behind her. He stepped out in front of her and asked, "Looking for someone?"

For his answer, he got a deep kiss and an, "Oh, yes...", and that was good enough for him!

He didn't want to stop kissing her and feeling her arms wrapped around him, but they needed to move somewhere more private.

"Come, Room of Requirement, now."

She followed him quickly, anxious to have him inside.

As soon as they stepped in, she dropped her robe. "Please, Ron, I need you, I need this. Please, now!"

He hastily undressed them both and pulled her with him onto the bed that the room had so thoughtfully provided. Oh, yes, he needed this. He took her bra off, tossing it on the floor. Barely stopping to kiss her breasts, he took his hands and ran them down her body. He hooked his thumbs inside her knickers and pulled them off. She ran her hand along his hard cock. *Oh, Mother!* He grabbed her head and shoved her face down to his cock. He jerked his hips up. Oh, God, this was just how he imagined it. She

sucked him up and down a few times, and he almost came to that, he was so aroused.

"Stop." He gasped. "Need... you... now..." he said, panting. He flipped her on her back and spread her legs apart. He took one finger and slid it gently inside her, feeling her tense up. Oh, sweet Merlin, His 'Mione was still a virgin! Oh, but not for long. He couldn't control himself any longer, and he thrust into her, hard. As he broke her maidenhead, she screamed and a small tear fell down her cheek. He didn't have the time to worry about that though. He only had a limited amount of time before the potions wore off, and he had to use it well.

She was so wet, so hot, so tight. He wanted it to go on forever, but he couldn't... couldn't stop... too good. He thrust once more and spilled himself deep inside her. "My 'Mione, mine!" He bit softly on her neck and sucked to leave his mark. All of a sudden he started hearing screaming and felt her squirming beneath him, her hands hitting his back. *These damn potions wear off too quickly!*

"Stop! Oh God, Ron stop please! Please don't do this! Ron, please!" she cried fruitlessly. It was too late. The act was done. She wept openly as she grabbed at her wand.

"*Confundus*," he said simply, pointing his own at her.

The hex she was about to cast died on her lips.

"What? Where are we? Ron? What the hell is going on?" She looked around the room wildly. Noticing their clothes were on the floor, she looked at him in horror. "Oh, God, no. I wouldn't have. You... you... I'm going to ki..."

He mentally sighed. *Here we go again...*

"*Petrificus Totalus*" He smiled wickedly at her. "Can't have you killing me, my dear. I'd hate to have you in Azkaban." He grabbed her wand *Finite Incantatum*."

Hermione felt sick. He had just... she couldn't bring herself to even think it, and now he had her wand. She looked at him in terror.

He walked to the door, and just before leaving, he again looked at her and said smoothly, "You know you wanted it." Then he rolled her wand at her and left. She'd come back to him eventually.

Hermione shook her head and looked around. *What the bloody hell just happened?* There was nothing she could do but cry.

"Draco! Draco, where are you?" Harry ran wildly through the halls. "Draco!"

"Calm down, I'm right here. What, is there an angry Doxy after you?"

"Hermione..." Harry stopped and tried to catch his breath.

"There's an angry Hermione after you?" Draco laughed. "Yeah, that's a reason to run. What'd you do?"

"No, no. Hermione, she's missing. I went to the room, just like you said, and I knocked and she's not there. The painting said she had left. Why would she leave? She knows Ron likes to hang out around here at night!"

"I think we have to find Professor Snape."

As the two boys hurried down to the dungeons, they ran past the Room of Requirement. Harry and Draco were so focused on getting to Snape that they almost didn't notice a girl sitting outside the room, her knees pulled up to her chest, hair messed and unruly, staring out at nothing.

"Hermione?" Draco stepped towards her slowly.

"Are you okay?" Harry asked, wondering what she was doing there instead of her room.

She didn't answer. Just stared ahead, her eyes unfocused.

Draco kneeled in front of her. "Hermione, what happened?" He tried to get her to look at him, but she just turned her head away from him. He looked up at Harry, quizzically.

Draco put a hand on her arm. She flinched and looked at him in terror. He stared back at her, and she took the moment to run, as fast as she could, back to her room.

Harry and Draco just looked at each other. "Ron." They said at the same time.

"Should we go to her?" Harry asked.

"No. You saw how she reacted. Let's go find Professor Snape."

"Hermione, please open the door." Severus Snape's patience was growing thin. He wasn't a man for begging, and an emotional witch wasn't really his thing. When again she didn't answer, he gave a final warning. "Miss Granger, open this door this instant or I shall have to force it open!"

She still didn't open it, and he did the only thing he knew how to do when *Alohamora* didn't work. He broke the door.

She was lying on the bed, turned away from him. "Miss Granger?" He walked over to her other side. He eyes were glassy and unfocused, and she was completely still, other than the soft sound of her shallow breath. "*Ennervate*" he said, pointing his wand at her.

"Miss Granger, stunning oneself is not effective in mental healing."

She blinked and looked up to see him standing over her with his wand in her face and screamed. "No! No, no, no!" She scrambled to the far side of the room away from him. "Please, no."

What was with the girl? Had she gone mad?

He took a step back. "Hermione." He said, trying her name out. "Hermione, I'm not going to hurt you. I'm putting my wand away." He slowly put it back into his robes. "What has happened? Are you hurt?" His face, for the first time in many years, showed compassion and worry for another's sake.

He had a sick feeling in his stomach that he knew exactly what had happened, and he was to blame.

She was silent for a while, then said one word, accusingly: "You."

"Me?"

"You said you'd protect me. You promised." She let herself sink to the floor and began rocking back and forth. Her body shook in tiny shivers.

"Hermione, I'm going to give you something to make this better, okay? It won't hurt you. I promise." He pulled a small vial out of his pocket.

"You promised before." She turned her head away from him as hot bitter tears fell again. She didn't even feel them run down her face. She couldn't feel anything.

"Take it. It's Dreamless Sleep. You need it."

"No potions."

"Hermione, it's for your own good. Please." He uncorked it and held it out to her.

She looked at him for a split second before accepting the bottle and smelling it. When she was satisfied he wasn't poisoning her, she drank it and held out the vial to him with a shaking arm.

"Go to the bed, you'll..."

"No! Not the bed! No, please..." Her argument was useless. The potion was already beginning to take effect.

"... Be asleep soon," he finished.

Her head began to fall, and her eyes were closing softly.

"*Mobilicorpus*" he whispered quietly and moved the sleeping girl to her bed. He covered her with the blankets, extinguished all the candles in her room, and cast *Reparo* on her door before leaving.

He sat down on the stairs outside her room, covered his face with his hands and let one single tear fall down his cheek.*What have I done?*

Loads of thanks to RobisonRocket, my wonderful beta!