

Sex Therapy in the Dungeons

by BloodyBrilliantRuthie

COMPLETED! Severus experiences Erectile Dysfunction. Hermione is a Sex Therapist. Will she be able to cure him?

Nominated for best fic in the 2006 OWL Humour Category.

Now Completed!

What Happened to IT?

Chapter 1 of 15

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Summary: Severus experiences Erectile Dysfunction. Hermione is a Sex Therapist. Will she be able to cure him?

A/N: Big wet smootches to my first beta, Jackie, and my current beta, the mighty Wartcap! Both betas have cast their beta charms and made STITD much better than I could've hoped. And thanks to my best friend, Frances, who threatens me with an Unforgivable if I don't give her first dibs on reading each chapter!

This is a Work in Progress and is labled as humor but it also has some angst and drama. This is not a PWP as there is a significant plot. Please enjoy!

Disclaimer: I'm not JKR. Duh!

or

I am JKR! Just Kidding, Really!

~*~

CHAPTER ONE: What Happened to IT?

"Fuck, fuck, fuck." Frustration reverberated in his voice.

"Yes, Severus, yes, fuck me! I can't wait anymore," she demanded into the pillow while he moved behind her.

He'd only known this bitch for a little over two hours, and here she was telling him what to do like she was his Lord. Looking at her rear end, he contemplated shoving his semi-flaccid penis into her or climbing off and putting his pants back on. No, he decided. He needed a shag, and this bitch was way too eager, coming on to him like a dog in heat. She wanted IT, and she told him so and then grabbed him, showing him in no uncertain terms what IT was that she wanted.

"Witch, just shut up and let me work!" He slapped her rear as a way to get even with the chit for being so presumptuous while hiding behind its kinkiness.

"Severus, I need you in me now. I want to feel you moving inside me... I want you to pump me hard and fast." She panted her demands, hoping her forceful erotic statements were adding to the pleasure she thought he was building up for her. Her brain was foggy in anticipation of what this man would do to her. He was a war hero, after all, and she wanted his seed as her prize for catching this celebrity.

He decided that regardless of her insolent behavior, he was going to take her. But IT wasn't responding to her. IT hadn't been responding much lately, but he'd had no relationship experiences since IT decided to retire. It had only been him and IT when he realized that his usual morning greeting hadn't, in fact, greeted him in a while.

He reached around and grabbed her breast in his continuing effort to find some part of this erotic enough to get blood rushing to IT. Positioning himself closer to her entrance, he grabbed IT with his other hand and began to masturbate against her moisture, and... nothing. Desperate for a reaction, he began shaking IT, and... nothing. He smelled her arousal, and while under normal circumstances this would've driven him wild, he was sickened. She wasn't doing it for him or for IT.

"Severus, what are you doing back there?" Her attitude was commanding.

"I've only had one Dark Lord, madam, and I killed him. I don't plan on submitting to another one."

"Oh, Severus my dear, come, honey, let me take care of that," she said as she noticed his now fully limp cock.

"I assure you, madam, that I function normally as a proper man should. It is you who fails to arouse me. And I refuse to continue to allow myself to submit to your incompetent ministrations. You are embarrassing yourself by attempting to arouse me with your bungling."

Severus had never seen someone dress so rapidly before. 'At least she could do that right,' he thought to himself. She ran from the room with sobs escaping, tears flowing, and without a single glance back to him. Severus knew he'd been overly harsh. The witch should've aroused him, but IT didn't want her. The chit, it was her fault. She should've been more appealing.

Alone, he sat in the rented room above The Leaky Cauldron in Diagon Alley. Calling the house-elf, he demanded Firewhisky, which the poor sod quickly provided. 'Good,' Severus thought, 'another person I intimidated tonight. That's two for two; I'm doing pretty well for myself.'

Downing his two fingers of the amber fire, he poured himself another two fingers and sat back to think of what he could've done to make IT work with the witch.

He didn't care for her. He'd just met her at the bar when she'd brazenly come on to him. He'd done what any unattached wizard would have done; he'd let the room immediately from Tom and taken her to bed. She'd wanted him. He had wanted her until he'd realized that IT was not responding.

Recalling how desperate she'd been for release, he rethought his strategy with the witch, thinking that maybe he should've finger fucked her and given her the release she desperately sought. But he would not pleasure her if IT wasn't going to get any satisfaction from her body. He didn't even care for the chit.

"Ah, bugger it, I don't give a shite!"

The bitch. She was too domineering. "No one dominates Severus Snape." He took IT in his hands and closed his eyes, enjoying his own practiced attentions. Rubbing his thumb along the tip and spreading his pre-cum, he knew IT was not dead, but yet something was wrong. IT was not the size it should be. It took longer for him to become erect, and once so, the skin was less taut around his penis than his memory served. As he continued to rub himself while he contemplated the events unfolding, he began to lose the erection he had gained.

As the frustration built in him, he reached out for the whisky and threw the bottle across the room, and with a satisfied crash against the far wall, he returned IT to his pants.

'I'm only 46 years old and way too young to be losing my fuckability.' And with that last thought, he downed the last of the whisky that remained in his glass, pulled on his cloak, and left the room, heading back to his dungeons at Hogwarts.

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The next morning, in the Great Hall, he remained fixated on his personal situation. Serving himself sausages and a fried egg, he recalled how in his reckless youth, while still infatuated by the Dark Lord's promises, he had thoroughly enjoyed a number of sex raids and had considered himself quite the sex god. He was good, and back then, IT was good to him too. It was altogether possible that all IT needed was another sex raid to get the blood flowing again. Severus considered this nefarious fantasy while he slowly buttered a piece of toast. For some reason he'd gone off his sausage.

He was startled out of his nostalgia to focus on a cackling Minerva McGonagall, who was sitting in her usual Headmistress spot in the center of the staff table to his left. She had her *Daily Prophet* opened, and her screeching was in response to something she had read. To Severus, she didn't look upset, so at least he wasn't going to be subjected to a lengthy discussion on the toils of this world. She was so thick sometimes.

"Have you all looked in today's paper?" she smugly asked the staff who were in attendance at breakfast.

Many staff members had had their own copies of the *Daily Prophet* already delivered by Owl earlier, including Severus. But he had yet to crack open his copy, and though the others had, none of them were aware of what she'd found that was so exciting.

"It's Hermione's ad!" she cried out. "Oh come on, everyone, Hermione Granger, the most brilliant witch of the age, from MY house," she added while looking at Severus in continuation of their house rivalries; she wanted to shove this one back in his face. "She has returned to England and has opened up her own practice!"

"What page are you looking at, Minerva?" Remus asked with a broad grin on his face while working desperately to find this ad that Minerva was referring to.

"Oh please, Minerva, you must gain control of yourself," Severus purred, ready to pounce his attitude onto his boss. "Hermione may have been a brilliant student, but to continue to boast is so unbecoming. She hasn't been your student in 10 years; surely you can try to find some worth in your current litter of measly lions."

"Severus, would you please stop being an arse for one moment this morning and allow an old lady to enjoy the success of a former student?"

"Minerva, what page?" Remus asked again. "And what business is she opening?"

"Um, page 16, on the lower right hand corner. She is a therapist, if memory serves. Ah yes, let me read her ad to everyone."

HERMIONE GRANGER, Ph.D.

Marriage and Family Therapist

Sex Counselor

REGAIN CONTROL OF YOUR SEX LIFE!

Counseling to explore sexual desires

Get to the root of sexual problems

STRICT CONFIDENTIALITY

Floo "Granger Practice" in London

"What in Merlin's name was that girl doing in America?" Minerva whispered, seemingly unable to believe what she had just read.

"It looks like she's been studying sex; she could've stayed in Britain for that! It's the oldest profession in the world!" Hooch continued with a gleam in her eyes. "Those Americans. What will they come up with next?"

Minerva looked at the woman's wicked smile. "Don't you dare say another word, you foul woman! This girl is a *Therapist*," she said, placing emphasis on *therapist* instead of focusing on the sex part of her profession. "She has been away for 10 years studying..."

"And apparently practicing, too!" Remus interjected with a sinful smirk.

"Of all the nerve. I have every right to... yes, that's it! I will bring Hermione here to show us what she has learned..." Blushing beet red, Minerva quickly rephrased her statement. "I mean, to tell us about her work as a *Therapist*." Again placing emphasis on her preferred generalized title for Hermione.

After a moment, Minerva realized that she hadn't had to battle wits with Severus regarding this unfortunate update on her favorite pupil of all time. She turned toward him to prepare for battle, but she realized he had gone, leaving his plate full of untouched breakfast and his chair carelessly left out. She also noticed his copy of the *Daily Prophet* was nowhere to be seen.

Like her predecessor, her eyes twinkled, and she felt a sudden urge for a lemon drop.

To Be Continued...

A/N Part deux: Go ahead, tell me what you think, I don't bite... all that much.

Come see the inner workings of my mind. It's not always pretty in there so consider yourself warned:

<http://www.gryffindorknowitall.blogspot.com/>

Virtues of Snape

Chapter 2 of 15

Severus experiences Erectile Dysfunction. Hermione is a Sex Therapist. Will she be able to cure him?

Summary: Severus experiences Erectile Dysfunction. Hermione is a Sex Therapist. Will she be able to cure him?

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CHAPTER TWO: Virtues of Snape

After the last of his classes, Severus sat slumped at his desk, exhausted and feeling as if he'd been buggered by the brainless dunderheads he was forced to teach. In one day he'd lost two cauldrons, one melted by a first year that apparently couldn't comprehend the difference between dicing and mincing; the second cauldron exploded in a blaze of glory reminiscent of the Weasley twins, and by a sixth year, no less. It seemed like he'd taken hundreds of points off today from every single brainless twit that'd had the misfortune to look at him the wrong way, or be in his path. Today he was an Equal Opportunity Points Deduction Master, and he discriminated against all.

The world was going to Hell. It was still toying with him even after the Dark Lord had turned to dust. Running his fingers over his scalp and through his lank hair, he breathed a sigh of frustration and began to ask God what the hell he was thinking, giving him this dreadful existence. His childhood, laced with unending pain, had been tainted by the wrath of unloving parents. At Hogwarts he'd been reviled and humiliated. As a young man he'd been nothing more than a slave to the Dark Lord, followed swiftly by his servitude to a different master, Albus Dumbledore. He'd been sent to Azkaban, freed after a couple of months through the unwavering testimony to his innocence that only a Pensieve could provide. Thank God Albus had the foresight to save the memory of his forcing him into an Unbreakable Vow to end his life, if and when death was inevitable.

While he was no longer in Azkaban, he felt he was in his own kind of hell. He was now Lord-free and should be living a joyous existence, but he was still teaching dunderheads and unable to take another job, as the Wizarding community is not as forgiving as the Ministry's court system. Ironic, really.

And despite his being miserable on a day-to-day basis, he had always found release in the basic pleasures of life. And now, he was without his manhood. As much as he hated to admit it, he had indeed lost his fuckability.

Remembering Hermione's advertisement in today's *Daily Prophet*, he removed his copy, found the ad, clipped it, and finally was able to examine, in detail, his own copy.

Sex Therapist... Sexual desires... Sexual problems...

How could life fuck with him so sufficiently?

He had a very embarrassing problem. He would love to explore his *sexual desires*. He could care less about exploring the root of his *sexual problems*, but he just wanted IT to work! Why in Merlin's name was Hermione the only Sex Therapist in the Wizarding world? His former student!

"There is no fucking way that I can go to her to explore any *desires*, and worse, find the root to my *sexual problems*!"

"Bugger it all to hell!" He placed Hermione's advertisement into the middle of the nearest book, and as he made his way into his chambers, he set the book on a bookshelf in his personal library.

'I'll be okay, I just need the right bitch to fuck.' With that thought, he went to his shower to bathe and attempt to take matters into his own hands for now.

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Minerva had decided that it would be best for Hermione to visit Hogwarts during the Halloween Feast, and making it a reunion of sorts, she invited Harry and Ron as well.

Severus just kept asking God why He was out to get him. Hadn't he paid enough retribution in his life? He continued to get fucked every which way but Tuesday, and even then, Tuesdays were not always pleasant.

The weeks had gone by rather quickly, and if the dunderheads were any indication, tonight was the night of the Halloween Feast. At the last Potions class of the day, his menacing attitude combined with the long, arduous day of classes usually had the dunderheads weak and weary. But today they were alert and very chatty, and they hadn't even consumed their sugar laden holiday treats yet.

It was time for his very own Snape Personal Inventory Checklist, or SPIC, as he liked to refer to it. Not that he was ever adverse to name calling, whether it was an individual or a group of individuals. Case in point: 'dunderheads'. But he wasn't a purist and he definitely wasn't a racist. Therefore, SPIC held no negative connotations for his sensibilities, if he even believed that he had any.

'And those Puerto Rican ladies... uummmm, no matter what size or age, they're always so sexy and beautiful.'

'Okay, to SPIC.'

'One: Growl firmly in place; check. Two: Arms crossed; check. Three: Erect posture; check. Four: Penetrating stare...'

'Bugger, why the fuck do I have to always end up thinking about IT again?'

~*~

Severus found himself nursing a drink and sitting on the edge of his bed, staring straight ahead into his wardrobe, where a sea of black greeted him.

He was tired after a long day of trying to shove knowledge into the meager brains of dunderheads who had the nerve to call themselves 'students'. Students yearn for knowledge, for education and direction. These dunderheads yearned for nothing but gossip, recreation and sex. What the hell did they know about sex, anyway?

"Why, in all that's just and foul, am I sitting here contemplating what to wear?" Severus knew that all he had to wear was black. He rather enjoyed wearing his black clothes, with just a hint of his crisp white shirt peaking out at his wrists and his collar. He loved his look; it was his alone. It would never be said that Severus Snape was a slave to fashion or a reproduction of another living soul. No, he was Severus Snape, a persona unto himself.

True, but it didn't change the fact that he found himself staring into this closet, wondering what to wear. The chit. Ever since she'd put that obtuse advertisement in *the Daily Prophet*, he could do nothing but think of her coming to Hogwarts and seeing right through his façade, and knowing that he'd lost his ability to fuck.

Did he think she could know this though Legilimency? Well, maybe; she was a smart witch, after all. But he knew his skills in Occlumency were unmatched, and he could prevent her and anyone else from seeing anything that he did not want them to see. Even the arrogant Dark Lord (can't get more arrogant than that, to name yourself 'Dark Lord') only saw what the exceptional Severus Snape wanted him to see. Up until the very end, the Dark Lord had thought that Severus was his right hand man. He'd been blind to his talents and true loyalties as he'd focused on the Potter kid. Really, how in the world anyone could truly believe that a child would bring down the Dark Lord, Severus could not fathom. It appeared that dunderheadness lasted beyond adolescence.

He decided that changing his style was not what he desired, nor was it possible considering the meager choices before him. But his goal for tonight was to present himself as a confident and well-satisfied man. There was no way she could use whatever skills it was that America had seen fit to teach her against him. 'Damned Americans.'

Drinking the last of his golden treat, he took a quick yet thorough shower, careful to clean his hair, and definitely clean behind the ears... He dressed in a clean set of robes and presented himself in front of the mirror. He looked crisp and clean. He decided to do away with his academic robes; placing them aside, he took himself in again. Splendid. Using a Muggle product he'd found last year while shopping in London, Redkin Just For Men Styling Hair Crème, he placed some in his palms, rubbed his hands together, and ran his fingers, laden with the product, through his hair, careful to use it sparingly as its rich masculine scent could become overpowering if too much were used. Finishing his 'confident and satisfied' Snape routine, he used another Muggle product, this one for his face, Philosophy Hope in a Jar. Stupid name, but the damned product worked! His face had never looked so clear and dewy.

With one last look, and satisfied that he presented himself as a man who got regularly shagged, he was on his way to the Great Hall.

~*~

The actual Feast went as well as could be expected. The dunderheads were overly excited, surely not helped by the tons of sugar now in their systems. But unfortunately, they were also excited by the presence of three War Heroes, and despite the fact that Severus was the real War Hero, the only one to bring down Mr. Dark Lord himself, this fact was overlooked day after day after day. No one wanted his autograph; no one revered him the way he saw these stupid dunderheads admiring Potter, Weasley, and even Granger.

God definitely had it in for him.

For the first time ever, he was actually grateful that he wasn't one of the professors chosen this year to patrol the halls and supervise the children as the staff gathered for their own traditional Halloween party. He needed a drink, and thankfully the only sugar to be found at the staff party was that inherently present in the hops, barley, grain, potatoes, or distilled grapes. While he typically preferred to skip these staff events, he was eager to hear from Granger what her new business entailed. Of course, he would keep his trademark scowl firmly in place in order to feign disinterest.

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"Hermione, I can't tell you how happy we are to see you after so many years!"

"Oh, Remus, it really has been too long! It really is good to be back!" she said, brandishing a bright toothy smile and taking in everyone she had missed for so long.

"So," Remus' eyes gleamed, "during dinner, we couldn't begin talking about your new found career with all of the students around, but believe me, we all want to know."

"You've no subtlety nor sophistication, Remus!" Minerva shot at him.

"Minerva, what do you expect, considering his pedigree?" retorted yours truly.

"What has gotten into everyone today? Severus I can understand a bat never changes his color but you, Remus? Please, let's have a decent evening and enjoy our friends."

"Please, Minerva, I'm actually rather enjoying myself! It makes me feel as if I have never left!" Hermione responded while scanning the room, looking at her old professors and friends. "And I would love to talk about my new business; I'm rather excited about it!"

Severus noticed that her excitement was evident in her pose, her voice, and her eyes. Those eyes, and that smile.... She radiated confidence and sensuality. Never before had he seen her so sure of herself about anything other than academia. But, of course, that was years ago. He didn't even know the woman in front of them now.

His thoughts were interrupted by Hooch. With her yellow eyes burrowing into Hermione's chest region and a very satisfied smirk, she said, "Hermione, you certainly are looking all grown up and, ahem... sumptuous." Hooch finished her observation with a sensuous flick of her tongue over her lips.

Severus almost choked on his Firewhisky, and Remus was laughing so hard that he looked as if he would pass out from lack of oxygen. Harry and Ron started smiling broadly, probably imagining what Hooch and Hermione would look like naked in bed.

'Stupid kids, always with their heads in the gutter.' Although, Severus had to admit to himself that he thought that an interesting diversion to his usual set of imagery.

"Hooch, you have got nerve!" Minerva spit out as fast as she could without getting too much drink down her chin.

"Minerva, it's quite all right. I would've been quite concerned at the end of the evening if I hadn't received any attention at all!" Hermione interjected to soothe her former Head of House. "This dress cost enough Galleons and had better convey sensuality." She smiled and scanned the room as everyone, including her two best friends, stared at this woman, in awe at her forthrightness. "And apparently my Galleons were well spent!"

Turning towards her newfound admirer, Hermione continued as if they were the only ones in the room. "Madam Hooch, while I am grateful for the attentions, and although I am not in a relationship at the present time, I am a complete heterosexual, and therefore, have no inclinations toward a sexual encounter with a woman. Not that there's anything wrong with that, of course." Severus noticed Hermione walking closer to her to the point of invading her personal space. Looking into her yellow eyes, she whispered not so quietly, "But if I decide at some future time for some... experimentation, I shall indeed remember your delightful comments."

The room broke out into a nervous laugh, and Severus felt a wonderful twitch down in his nether regions. AAAHHHH, IT was alive!

~*~

An hour into their staff party, everyone was sufficiently inebriated, and Hermione's friends no longer held back the burning questions that they were dying to ask since the publishing of her advertisement just weeks prior.

"No, no, seriously it was all by accident, really." Hermione, taking another sip of her wine, continued, "After seventh year, I went to New York City on vacation and stayed with my cousin, who introduced me to the psychotherapy field. I was enamored with Freud, Jung, and even Dr. Ruth! I began taking classes, and years later, I'm a Therapist!"

"So, you went to the States and woke up one morning wanting to help people to **REGAIN CONTROL OF YOUR SEX LIFE?**" Remus smirked as he yelled out the caption of her advertisement.

It seemed like no one was in control of their inhibitions this night. The last thing anyone expected was for a tipsy Ron to stand up on top of the staff table and declare his adolescent sexual inexperience as Hermione's reason for delving into this line of work.

"It was 'cause of me, right, 'Hermione?" Not waiting for her to answer, he continued, "Really, I know, I remember, it was... it was... well, you could've given me another chance, you know, to make it better and all." While he was talking, his body swayed dangerously on the table, and he kept shoving his whiskey glass to an imaginary person in front of him, then back again.

"Ronald, you were the beginning of my sexual experiences, not the end. My career decision really had..."

"I wasn't enough for you, remember? You wanted an older, more experienced man! How could you play with me like that, Hermione?" Not waiting for Hermione to answer, Ron continued, "Shhhh, I know, I know... you just needed someone with more sex appeal than I had."

Everyone seemed to enjoy this brief exposure into the adolescent angst of what was, and apparently what remained to be, Ronald Weasley.

"She's scarred him for life, she has," Hooch said to Remus, feeling sympathy for Ron.

"Oh, Ron, just get the hell down!" Harry screamed at his best friend, "It has been over ten years. Just get over it, man!"

"Ronald, for your information, EVERYONE has sex appeal! Everyone in this room is sensuous and desirable. And Ron, by everyone, I also mean YOU!" Hermione's eyes twinkled and she scanned the room, measuring the sexuality potential of everyone present.

'Fuck,' thought Severus, 'here she goes, doing exactly what I don't want her to do. She's examining us like we're on an auction block.'

Severus knew Hermione was nutters when she climbed on top of the table to join Ron and looked him over. Then, holding his face toward her, she said, "Ronald, you are a good man, and good is sexy. Let us not forget that you are ginger, and every woman wants to have ginger bits at least once in her life." She smiled wickedly as she kissed him on the cheek. Severus noticed Ron blushing up to the tips of his ears as a bulge grew in the boy's pants. This was going to be a long and grueling night.

Turning her attention to her audience, she climbed down ungracefully, but no one seemed to notice or care. The tension in the room was thick, despite the free flowing nature we had felt just moments before. Now seemed to be the time for truth or dare, and no one was going to pull a dare with Hermione.

"Now, let's look at Madam Hooch." Reaching out to hold her hands, she held them close to her breast and whispered, "You, my dear, are mesmerizing. Your eyes show your strength, and I feel like I can see into your soul. You are clearly a very passionate and uninhibited woman."

"Ah, Remus." Turning her attention toward him, she continued, "Like Ronald, you are also a good man. Your good nature is attractive in and of itself, but you have a mysterious quality that is very sexy. Your lycanthropy gives you an animalistic quality that drives women wild for you." She approached him and gently held his face in her hands. Giving him a lingering peck on the lips, she added, "You, my dear Remus, are an animal in bed--it's obvious--and any woman in her right mind would take you."

Remus was quite moved by Hermione's estimation of his sexual prowess--in more ways than one, according to Severus' sexual excitement radar. He was obviously sexually stimulated by Hermione's words and action, as he immediately sat down and shifted in his seat.

Hermione was now walking towards... 'Oh my God, please not...'

"Oh yes, Minerva, my old Head of House!" Hermione said with an impious stare as she walked toward her, unaware of the screaming going on in Severus' head.

"Hermione, come on. Leave everyone alone," Potter said, more than likely for his own sake as he knew he would eventually be approached by Hermione and given the once over.

"I'm just having a little fun and teaching everyone a little about themselves in the process, so you leave me alone!" Hermione smirked at Harry with sultry gaze, or maybe it was just a drunken ogle.

"Minerva, I have always admired you." Hermione held her arm as if to court her, then slowly turned her around the room so as to present her to her friends in this new light Hermione was portraying. "You are the strongest woman that I have ever met. That alone is an attractive quality. Physically, you are beautiful. Your body is perfect and you carry yourself with quiet dignity and with sexual confidence." With that, she kissed her on the cheek and returned her arm.

"Oh, my dear! You may have quieted everyone else with your estimations of their sexuality, but I am very pleased with your assessment of my, shall I say, qualities." Minerva continued with a sinful grin and lifted up her brandy snifter in a mock toast. "And I, for one, am very glad that I am sufficiently drunk to be able to enjoy it!"

"Harry, Harry, my best friend!" Turning and swiftly walking toward him, she said, "The way you ride a broom gives all of us girls dreams of Transfiguring ourselves into the next Nimbus model." She reached out both hands and smoothed them over his upper arms, feeling his muscles underneath his robes in what Severus estimated was a very erotic nature. He guessed that they would bed each other tonight.

'Lucky bastard.'

"Ah, I have saved the very best for last, right, Severus?"

To Be Continued...

A/N:

Will Severus allow Hermione to expound on the virtues of Snape?

Will Harry put an end to this debauchery?

Will Severus bed Hermione?

Will IT work?

To the answers of these questions and more, please stay tuned...

A huge THANKS to Jackie, my first beta. A bow, a curtsy, and a sloppy kiss to Warty for re-beta'ing this whole story with British finesse and eliminating my foul Americanisms!

Regarding some of the above:

SPIC: I surprised myself when I came up with the Snape Personal Inventory Checklist and realized what the acronym was. I do not mean to offend anyone by my SPIC comments or by the reference to Puerto Rican ladies. You see, I am one and if I thoroughly enjoyed it, I would hope that others are not offended.

Snape's beauty products! Ah, I had such a kick with this! I had him use my Severus' hair crème, and use my face care moisturizer.

'Damned Americans' I'm also one, so please don't be offended. This is just a story out of my muddled mind.

What are friends for? To give credit where credit is due, I must apologize to my dear friend for not immediately recognizing where some of this crap that's in my brain originated from. Some of it came from her! So, a big 'thank you' to SiriusWoman for telling me once about her wanting to be Dan Radcliffe's Firebolt! Also, for her telling me she wanted some of Rupert's ginger bits!!! Ha!! SiriusWoman, you're awesome!

"Not that there's anything wrong with that." Do you know where that's from?

I hope you all are enjoying this story. As always, please feel free to read and review. Comments and suggestions are always welcomed. And, I rarely bite... really.

~Ruthie

www.gryffindorknowitall.blogspot.com

Greasy Git or Sex God?

Chapter 3 of 15

Severus experiences Erectile Dysfunction. Hermione is a Sex Therapist. Will she be able to cure him?

Summary: Severus experiences Erectile Dysfunction. Hermione is a Sex Therapist. Will she be able to cure him?

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CHAPTER THREE: Greasy Git or Sex God?

"Ah, I have saved the very best for last, right, Severus?"

'Bugger it, bugger it, bugger it all to hell!' Severus screamed inside his head, 'Here comes the young chit, thinking that she can tell me what I don't already know about the virtues of a Snape!'

"Madam, please... I ask you to refrain from expounding the virtues of that which I know I well possess. I am a Snape, after all. And refrain from using my given name. I have not given you liberty to use it, Miss Granger."

"Yes, *Professor*," Hermione playfully responded, placing emphasis on his title, "but you really have no idea, do you, Professor? No, you don't really know. I can share stories with you about the fantasies in which you and I shared starring roles. When I was a student, I would fantasize about detention, and your taking me over your desk while..."

"Hermione!" Harry yelled, "Hermione, stop it! Are you out of your fucking mind? You've had way too much to drink!"

"Bloody hell, I am not nearly drunk enough to listen to this," Ron whispered while clutching the sides of his head.

"I agree, Hermione," Minerva began in a melancholy tone. "Unfortunately, even I am not drunk enough to keep that unfortunate picture out of my head."

"Madam, if you really knew me, you would know that I would never bed a student; therefore, these fantasies of which you speak will remain a..." Recognizing Minerva's insult, Severus jerked his head towards his boss and yelled, "Minerva, what the hell did you mean by 'unfortunate picture'?"

"Oh, Severus, please, the last thing I need is to imagine my Deputy in an excited and aroused state!"

"Minerva, you know that I would never..."

Holding her head in her hands and mumbling, Minerva responded, "Severus, this has nothing to do with my trust in you; I know that you would never take advantage of a student. I just prefer to keep my mind clear of images of you with an erection."

"I can assure you, Madam, that a Snape with an erection is as impressive as it is appetizing. You cannot know how erotic and passionate an evening with me can be. I have vigor and vitality. I focus my energies on my lover, and once sated, I take her and fill her, satisfying her again and again... completely and thoroughly."

Minerva sat there, mouth hinged open, unable to believe Severus' unabashed comments. Unable to form her jumbled thoughts into words, she began shaking her head back and forth in the most non-verbal show of disapproval she could muster, considering her current state of intoxication.

Severus was seething. 'How dare the old biddy intone that I'm anything less than a sexual being! I am a sex God, and how dare anyone think otherwise! I am master of my domain, provider of sexual pleasures; an evening with me is compelling and thrilling, satisfying and stimulating. I am an explorer. Haven't people ever noticed my large feet? And everyone knows what that means. Yes, I am indeed a sex God!'

Awakening from his own self-aggrandizement, he slowly took in the astonished looks of his colleagues and former students. 'Ah, shite! Did I really say all those things to Minerva out loud?' Shocked at his outburst, yet satisfied that he'd put her in her place, he thought, 'Well, now the old biddy knows better than to imagine me as anything but unappealing... Shite, shite, shite, now they will all imagine me as such. Well, there could be worse fates; they could know... other things.'

Severus noticed that Hermione's expression was not one of shock, as was the case with the rest of the room. He realized she seemed almost... pleased. And before he could comprehend what she could possibly be pleased about, she began walking toward him and... 'Merlin, she's going to continue her diatribe... Hmm, maybe she'll elaborate about her bending over my desk without the old biddy interrupting.'

"Professor, I am not surprised." Walking over to where he sat with his fingers clenched around his Firewhisky, she reached out and gently touched his upper arm and leaned toward him and said, "But, Professor, I am no longer your student." She was purring close enough to his ear that he felt the heat radiate into his brain... and his groin.

'Life is good again.'

He didn't know if it was her warm breath, or his arousal, but his brain seemed to turn to mush and he was left, for once, speechless.

No, she wasn't a student anymore. Not his, nor anyone's student. She had returned to Hogwarts and presented herself as a most sexually liberated woman who knew her desires and had been able to put aside all sexual inhibitions.

"No, you are most definitely not." Although he hadn't intended, his response sounded as sultry as hers.

Preparing herself another drink and slowly walking back toward him, her hips swayed in such a fashion that made the dress definitely worthy of her purchase. "You, Professor Severus Snape, are the most desirable man in this room." Deeply entranced with the object of her attentions, she was completely unaware of all the eyes in the room on her and Severus.

Remus interrupted her reverie, "While I strongly disagree with you, Hermione, I am in no position to argue in my current state of mind. I'm actually anticipating that this is all a terrible nightmare, and I will wake up in a world where Severus is again a greasy git--or is that a greasy bat?"

"Yes, yes, I quite agree, Remus. Well, not so much about the git or bat thing. But I don't think I can take anymore of this," Minerva said, turning toward her once beloved pupil. "And you, Hermione, I cannot believe what I'm hearing. Surely my ears are deceiving me! Or maybe it's the alcohol, but you can't be... I mean, you really mustn't be... I mean, are you really coming on to Severus? You have indeed grown up, child; well, not really a child... apparently."

"Hermione, let's go, come on," Harry said, though he knew that she would not.

"Harry, I'm not finished here," Hermione replied to Harry while never taking her eyes off of Severus. "You and Ron go. I will see you all in the morning in the Great Hall at breakfast."

"Come on, Harry," Ron said while tugging on Harry's arm, "I'm not going to stick around and watch."

"Hermione, you're drunk, you don't want to regret saying or," Harry turned his eyes on Severus, "doing anything you will regret in the morning."

"Why, you insolent and arrogant fool! If you two children don't see fit to disappear, I shall throw you out!"

With one last mournful look toward their best friend, they departed to their assigned rooms for the night.

'Brainless twits,' Severus thought.

Working to quickly think of some scathing remark to rid himself of the other lousy, meddlesome fools, he returned his gaze to the rest of the room, sarcastic remark in mind. Running through his SPIC checklist, he opened his mouth only to shut it quickly upon noticing that the only other person in the room was Hermione.

'Perfect.'

~*~

Severus was enjoying Hermione's company. She was funny and all too perceptive as she elaborated on his sex appeal.

"Professor, one of the first things a woman senses from you is power. You exude power and strength of character. And that is very, very sexy, Professor. Your scathing tongue and biting remarks are intoxicating..."

Hermione appeared breathless as she continued on the virtues of this particular Snape. "It creates a fantasy world where you're dominant and," averting her gaze from him and looking bashful for the first time tonight, she continued, "well, for those of us into that sort of thing, makes us immediately..." Despite being the only ones in the room, she whispered in his ear, "Wet with desire for you, Professor."

Practically choking on his own saliva upon hearing her brashness, he let out a controlled cough to mask his shock. He was unable to fathom his luck. There was no way that he was going to let her get away with saying such things and not backing them up, former student or not.

He pulled her close and purred, "I believe that calls for further exploration, don't you?"

"Absolutely, Professor," was the only response needed. That, and a smile.

~*~

Severus was slightly concerned that he could not perform. But he was encouraged by the sign of life IT showed on several occasions this evening. He was certain--well, at most, hopeful--that once he had this confident woman in his arms, he would be able to take her. But could he take that chance and embarrass himself with Hermione? She was not some brainless stranger that had picked him up at a bar; she was in a position to tell his unfortunate secret to everyone she knew. But she was a Sex Therapist. Would she violate her code of ethics to share his most embarrassing secret? Regardless, he was fairly certain IT would respond and decided to go for it.

Severus turned away from Hermione, scanning the room for a more appropriate spot for them to shag. Taking in the comfortable couch, he walked towards it, slowly sitting back, and crossed his legs and while motioning for Hermione to join him. He said in his deepest and smoothest tones, "Come to me, Miss Granger." As she walked toward him, he removed his wand from his sleeve and warded the staff room door.

'There is no way any fucking dunderheads, young or old, are going to interfere.'

Sheathing his wand, he sat back and embraced Hermione as she sat next to him and into his waiting arms.

Holding on to her young firm body, Severus began exploring her mouth with his tongue. He knew he was an expert kisser and was giving her his all in that department. He sucked, licked, flicked, and nibbled. At some point, he hadn't realized that he leaned her back and now lay lightly atop her, using his left arm as leverage so as to not crush her. He explored her body with his eyes and with his mouth. He was concentrating on his soon to be lover below him so intently that although he was excited and stimulated, his erection had not returned. Here he was with this vixen below him, grabbing his arse and pulling it down toward her. He realized that she might have realized that IT had not responded, and he immediately pulled away from her. Sitting back up and trying to compose himself, he said, "I'm sorry, Miss Granger, I..."

"Severus, please, why did you stop? And would you please call me Hermione?"

'What the bloody hell am I going to say?' Severus internally asked himself. He would have to think of something fast, because she was looking at him like she was going to take command of this situation and devour him of her own accord.

Hermione didn't allow him to begin his explanation. She sat up and brought herself close to his face, her arms wrapping around him, and started to kiss him deeply.

Severus responded to her kisses, realizing that as much as he was enjoying her affections, IT was not. He gently pulled away from her, and with his lips gently gliding on her cheek, he said, "I have no doubt that I could take you and make you scream my name over and over again. But, Miss Gra... I'm sorry, Hermione," he paused and took several calming breaths, then continued, "I am a professor at this school, and you are my former pupil. It just doesn't seem right. I may be a bastard, of that I am not ashamed, but I am guided by my strong morals and principles, and when I look at you, I still see my pupil."

"Maybe one day that will change." He was hoping to leave a door open for a future encounter, when he would be more confident of IT's response. "But for now, as attracted as I am to you, I must end this before it begins."

Moving to stand in front of him, Hermione said, "Severus, look at me." She grabbed his right hand and guided it gently over her breasts and down her body, and over her mound through her dress. He felt as if he was tortured. He was touching a very sensuous woman, he was excited, but he could do nothing about it. IT remained uninterested.

'Bugger IT!'

Panting and looking down into his face, she continued, "Severus, I am not a student, and I am not a child. I want you... I want you to take me, fill me, make me yours. I've wanted you for a long time." Still holding his hand to her mound, she began moving his hand in a slow, circling motion while gently pressing it into her.

'The minx is masturbating using my hand!'

"Severus." Her other hand came up and grabbed his head, pulling it closer. "I need you, please, give me what I've needed for so long. You are so delicious."

Severus let her hand guide his head to her body where it met his hand, still circling her mound. He knew exactly what she wanted, and he would be only too happy to oblige. But IT would not comply!

Pulling himself completely away from her, he collected himself and guided her to sit back down next to him. He realized that the measly excuse he used to feign his sense of morality was not working. He needed another tactic.

"Hermione, I apologize. As much as I want to take you, I cannot. This has nothing to do with you. You are very attractive and... stimulating. I am unable to have you, because I am committed to another witch, and I cannot betray her trust."

"Oh, Severus! I'm sorry, I don't know why I didn't think to ask!" Pulling herself together, she looked to be working hard to calm herself down. Once composed, she continued, "I feel terrible. Please know that I didn't mean any harm, I just..."

"Hermione," Severus purred, kissing her lightly on the lips, "if in the future you and I are simultaneously unattached, I would appreciate the opportunity to reacquire myself with you and possibly finish what we've started here tonight."

"I would like that very much," Hermione said as they ended their non-existent relationship with a gentle kiss.

~*~

If only a potion would remedy this situation.... But after extensive research, Severus only found a handful of potions, and they all required the menstrual blood of the witch who would benefit from the enhanced performance of the wizard. Surely, they must be the invention of a controlling and meddling witch whose evil plot was to ensure a wizard's fidelity. So, if he were to create one of these potions, he would need a sexual partner who was willing to not only have sex with him, but also to give some of her menstrual blood. Not an ideal situation, but doable. Further research exposed the more intricate secrets behind these potions that they clearly possessed. This was undoubtedly Dark Magic, which Severus thought was utterly ridiculous, considering this was solely to be used for being able to fuck, not to create a Dark Lord, or waken the dead. After completing his research, he was adamant that he would not need the intervention of a potion that required the witch and wizard to be bonded.

'No fucking way am I going to be bonded to anyone. No, I will have to regain my manhood the Muggle way. Hermione's new business now makes sense. Unbonded wizards who had lost their ability to obtain or maintain an erection had no magical means to remedy their situations.' Severus was not sure how many wizards had lost their ability to fuck, but he was now certain that Hermione's business would be a success. She was indeed a very smart witch.

Now, the task at hand would be to benefit from Hermione's services without letting her know that he needed them. 'Bloody hell, how do I get her to give me therapy to fix my problem without letting her on that I have this problem?'

As Hermione was getting ready to leave for her room, Severus unwarded the door and called after her, "Hermione, I do have some business I'd like to discuss with you tomorrow about a mutual acquaintance. If you're still interested in having anything to do with me, can you meet with me privately after breakfast?"

Brandishing her beautiful smile, Hermione said, "Absolutely. I would love to." And with that, she was gone for the night.

To Be Continued...

A/N: As always I must first acknowledge my first beta, Jackie. It always amazed me how she could understand the garbage I hand in to her! And of course to my most recent beta, the Mighty Wartcap! She makes me see the error of my ways and leaves me in stitches at the same time.

Also, to my dear friend SiriusWoman, who gave me several wonderful ideas for this story. For that, and because I love her, she gets first dibs on reading every chapter, even before my beta. She's a brave woman!

~Will Hermione ask for the identity of Severus' witch?

~Will Ron, Harry, Remus, Minerva and Hooch be able to look Hermione in the eye at breakfast?

~Will Ron and Harry vomit when they see Severus at breakfast?

Please stay tuned for the answer to these questions and more!

THANKS to all who have reviewed and continue to follow this story! You continue to blow me away with the reception you've given me.

~Ruthie

Come see the inner workings of my mind. It's not always pretty in there so consider yourself warned:

<http://www.gryffindorknowitall.blogspot.com/>

Gryffindor Investigations

Chapter 4 of 15

Severus experiences Erectile Dysfunction. Hermione is a Sex Therapist. Will she be able to cure him?

Summary: Severus experiences Erectile Dysfunction. Hermione is a Sex Therapist. Will she be able to cure him?

~*~

CHAPTER FOUR: Gryffindor Investigations

"You weren't at breakfast this morning," Hermione stated as she walked into Severus' chambers. "I hope you don't mind, but I wasn't sure if I should come down here or not." Hermione looked around his sitting room, admiring his décor. "Would you like to talk somewhere else?" she asked, unsure if he would want to spend time alone with her after what had almost happened last night.

"No, this is fine. I am pleased you're here," Severus said while motioning her to take a seat next to the fire. "I didn't go to the Great Hall for breakfast, as I was creating a Hangover Potion for myself." With that statement, he walked toward the cooling cauldron and poured himself his portion and drank it in one swift, practiced movement designed to decrease the foul taste of the concoction.

"Do you need some?"

"Yes, please! I've had some Tixymol, but it hasn't worked."

"What is Tixymol?"

"Well, it's a name-brand pharmaceutical product whose generic name is Paracetamol. It is an anti-inflammatory analgesic tablet, and its properties are designed to improve physical health in specific ways. First, it's designed to serve as a fever-reducer and pain-reliever, including the pain associated with headaches."

"But why not just take a potion?"

"Severus, Muggles don't have access to magical potions."

"Madam, of course they do not! But in case you've forgotten, you are a witch. And therefore my question remains: why not just take a potion?"

She was reminded of what a sarcastic bastard he was, and while she tried to quash the excitement building in her that only his brand of acerbic wit could create, she had mental images of him taking her with her hands tied above her head. She immediately became wet in anticipation. Pulling herself out of her reverie, she would not allow his cutting tongue to sidetrack her. Not backing down, and although physically not eye to eye with him in her seated position, she looked him in the eye and said, "Yes, *Professor*," matching his change in designations. "I am completely aware of my being a witch; that awareness came about somewhere between the ages of five and six years old. I, unlike you, am not a Potions master and therefore not able to create a Hangover Potion at my whim. If I were a Potions mistress, I would more than likely spend my time creating Sexual Enhancement Potions, and lubricants to increase sexual pleasure."

Hermione was instantly pleased as she noticed Severus' reaction to her uninhibited statements. He looked startled. Wanting to continue playing her upper hand, she said, "Now, Severus, does your offer still stand?"

"What offer?"

Pointing toward the cauldron, she said, "The potion, Severus. I would love some; I need to relieve this tension."

"Oh, yes, of course." Pouring her a portion, he handed it over and stared at her while she drank it.

Hermione noticed him ogling her cleavage as she drank her remedy. Once again, she was pleased with her choice in dresses. She'd chosen to forgo the more demure witch robes that tended to cover shoulders, arms, and body for the more form fitting and flattering Muggle clothes she preferred from Lord & Taylor.

She enjoyed taking the best of both of her worlds, and it was the same with Psychotherapy. She was the only one of her kind in the entire Wizarding world, which is what cinched her decision to return after her schooling had been completed. Once word got around, she might be ridiculed, but she believed that her business would boom. She would ensure confidentiality, as was only good practice, but she had decided to take it one step further. She would do without a formal waiting area so that no one was aware of who her other clients were. This would attract those who are most anxious about their secret conditions. She decided to space each client's appointment 20 minutes apart from the end of one session to the beginning of the next. This would allow her time to file her notes created by the Dicto-Quill, clear her mind, and freshen up before her next appointment was scheduled to Floo in. She only hoped that her business would pick up to the point where she would have need of this plan.

Hermione knew that although Severus was committed to his lover, as evidenced by his remarkable show of self-control, he was attracted to her, and she found satisfaction in knowing that. Maybe, if they kept in touch and remained friends, they would have the opportunity to have a sexual relationship in the future.

She wondered who this witch was and hoped that it was a witch and not a wizard. 'What was it he said, exactly? Ah yes, he said he was "committed to another witch." Very good. Not that there's anything wrong with that.'

Regardless, Hermione was certain he was sexually attracted to her, if the way he'd been devouring her last night was any indication. Not to mention the way he was ogling her now.

'Maybe he's changing his mind... No,' Hermione continued her internal conversation, 'I could not have an affair with a man committed to another witch. He could not have ended their relationship in this short amount of time.'

"Who I am fooling? Why would he give up his witch just to shag me?" With determination, she concluded, 'Nevertheless, I will not pursue or tempt him.'

"Thank you so much, Severus, I am..." Closing her eyes and breathing deeply, she whispered, "Satisfied and... relieved."

Severus fumbled with the glass she returned to him as he turned around to place it on the counter. He returned with tea.

"Here, although you've had breakfast already, you may enjoy some tea. At the very least, it will remove the dreadful taste of the Hangover Potion."

"Thank you," Hermione said as she reached for the cup he handed to her. She noticed his gaze never wavered from her chest region.

Hermione felt her breast swell knowing his gaze was upon her. She remembered his kisses from the night before and imagined him using his tongue to ravish her lips, breasts, and nether regions. She was certain Severus would notice her arousal as her body betrayed her through her increased heart rate and breathing. Although she felt the heat in her belly, she was fairly certain he would not notice that particular treachery.

As she tried to calm herself, she remembered his hands on her and imagined him brusquely pulling her up by her arms, out of her seat, and devouring her with his mouth. Her imagination was in control now. She was lost to it, and she felt as if she were on the brink of madness with the onslaught of sexually explicit hallucinations she was having. She was pulled out of her temporary madness by something Severus said, but for the life of her she didn't know what it was. All she knew was that he continued to look tempting, and continued to gaze into her breasts as if engaged in conversation with them instead of her. She was becoming offended that, despite being attached and choosing his witch over her, he continued to ogle her. 'Men can be such pigs,' she thought, and when she was just about to give him a piece of her mind, Severus interrupted her thoughts.

"Hermione, as uncomfortable as this makes me..."

"Uncomfortable? Come on, Severus, we almost shagged... okay? Get over it! Having sex is a normal part of human existence. These feelings we have are expected when two people are attracted to each other. It is nothing to be ashamed of, and if it wasn't for our sense of morality guiding us, we would all have sex with anyone and everyone we were attracted to. There is nothing to be uncomfortable about; you and I..."

"Madam," Severus cut her off, "apparently I know what your mind is on." His sultry tones exuded his arrogance with this unanticipated view into Hermione's psyche.

'Damn him to hell!' Hermione screamed in her head. She'd given herself away. 'Stupid, stupid, stupid of me to go on my rampage, assuming I knew what he was going to say! And now I've given myself away! Oh, woe... my counter-transference strikes again. Freud would be turning over in his grave if he knew I couldn't keep my internal crap to myself.'

Severus was suppressing a smile, Hermione could tell. Never had he looked so pleased with himself. 'Bugger him.'

"Hermione, if you would be so kind as to allow me to conclude my statements before interrupting... although, that continued behavior will allow for more interesting... conversations, to be sure." His smirk was unwavering, and Hermione could've shagged the bastard right then and there. "But I would like to discuss some personal business of a mutual acquaintance that would benefit from your professional opinions."

"My professional opinions? Well, I don't quite understand."

"Madam, please. You are a Therapist, correct?"

"You know I am, and please, damn it, call me Hermione!"

"Yes, yes of course."

He was pissing her off. 'Sod him, the arrogant bastard!'

"You see, *Hermione*, I have the unfortunate displeasure to be forced to listen to the ramblings of a fellow who, for some bizarre reason, considers me a friend. And despite my continued resistance, he has taken to disclose to me rather personal situations that I have no experience with which to help him."

"Go on, but please be more specific."

"This is the part, Hermione, that makes me uncomfortable. You see, it is not my problem, but that of this acquaintance I speak to you of. He had come to me for my assistance as Potions master, but for his problem, there is no potion with which he could safely take."

Hermione waited for him to finish, but was tempted to slap him in the back of the head to finally get the whole story out of him.

"This person came to me for assistance with his... impotence. Unfortunately, as an unattached wizard, there are no magical cures unless he chooses to be bound to his mate."

"Yes, I understand and am fully aware that single wizards with this condition have no other magical choice unless they bind."

"I thought you would know. Well, this wizard would benefit from your treatment, as he has decided not to be bound simply to cure his *condition*, as you call it." Severus sat back, and Hermione looked at him, thinking that he would continue, but he did not, and for some reason, he looked rather pleased with himself.

"Well, that is definitely an area of my expertise. I can assist him to understand the underlying cause of his disorder and help him to regain that which he has lost." Reaching into her pocket, Hermione pulled out her Louis Vuitton business card holder. She removed a card and, while handing it over to Severus, she rose out of her seat and smiled. "Thank you so much for sending me my first customer!"

"Hermione, wait!"

She was startled with his expression and, at his insistence, returned to the seat she had been occupying and prepared herself for a further elaboration of this friend's situation.

"Believe me, Hermione, I have already done what I can to encourage this person to go see you as soon as we saw your advertisement. But he refuses, and I cannot continue to listen to his self-pity when he chooses to do nothing to remedy his situation."

"Well, unfortunately, I am not surprised, though slightly concerned that with attitudes such as his, my business won't be as successful as I'd hoped."

"I have no understanding in this area, as I have always been virile, but I can tell you that your business seems to have a solid customer base, if my wizard friend is any indication."

"Thank you for your confidence, Severus. Well, since your friend refuses to see me, he can always go to a Muggle therapist and be given medication to help."

"Medication? Like Tixymol?"

"Well, 'yes' and 'no'. You see, it is similar in that the medications of which I am referring are a pharmaceutical product, but 'no' in that they are not as benign as Tixymol. There are a handful of pharmaceutical products designed to enhance a man's virility, though there are significant side effects. I've actually never recommended these products, as they have been known to dramatically increase a man's risk for heart failure, and I don't know if death is an acceptable risk to obtain an erection. Well, I guess

that's not my decision, but nonetheless, I don't recommend them.

"So just have him go to Muggle London and look up Sex Therapy in the phone book or through the Internet. There are some decent practitioners, but tell your friend to be careful because there are a lot of crackpots out there claiming that teas and other herbs can help with impotence. The fact is that they can't." Hermione was having a difficult time concentrating on anything other than mounting the arrogant bastard. Unable to control herself, she felt her only recourse was to flee from this continued temptation and saw her opportunity. "But since I haven't gained a customer, I guess I should be going."

"But, Hermione, wait. He's not sophisticated in Muggle technology or in the Muggle world. He won't be able to do that either."

"I don't understand, Severus. How am I expected to help him when he refuses to see me and refuses to go to a Muggle Therapist?" Hermione was becoming increasingly frustrated and was unable to understand why Severus would need to feel responsible for finding a solution for a friend who was so headstrong. If this 'friend' wanted to do something about his problem, he would do more than talk about it with someone who not only couldn't help him, but who apparently didn't give a damn... or did he?

Hermione began thinking of who this 'friend' could be. She knew she shouldn't try to work out the wizard's identity since it would violate the confidentiality this man was so adamant to maintain. But he wasn't her client, and she wasn't legally bound to maintain confidentiality. No, she had no need to maintain the confidentiality of a man she didn't even know! She was intrigued to know who would go to such lengths to keep this quiet, despite the debilitating feeling he must suffer.

The logical plan of attack to revealing the mystery wizard's identity was to think of what other men Severus could possibly know.

'Let me start with Hogwarts: Professor Flitwick. I'm not sure I've ever imagined his penis before; why would I? Can't be impressive. But it is possible it could be him. Professor Binns: Absolutely not, unless a ghost has sex, and that's a thought I'd rather not have. Hagrid: Oh my, could be, but if his witch isn't from giant ancestry, that would just hurt! Hermione instinctively closed her legs tighter at the thought of Hagrid's penis invading a regular witch. 'Arrgghh, why did I think of that? Okay, next, there's Professor Lupin. Possibly, but then why did he seem so turned on last night? Okay, who's next? There's Firenze and Filch, and now I think I'm about to make myself sick. I refuse to think about either one!'

Still going through her mental checklist of male Hogwarts teachers, Hermione realized there was one more: Professor Snape. 'Oh, stupid, he's the one who's trying to help the poor bloke! I don't know why, but I can't imagine Professor Snape trying to help anyone. He just doesn't seem like the helpful type.'

'So, how about male acquaintances outside of Hogwarts? There's Mr. Weasley. That's a possibility....' Hermione could not think of any other wizards either outside or within Hogwarts. 'It could be someone entirely unknown to me, but didn't Severus tell me that he wanted to discuss a 'mutual acquaintance'?

It had to be someone Hermione knew, which would explain why this wizard had refused to see her. It had to be someone that would feel comfortable talking with Severus, someone who had easy access to him since Severus was complaining that despite his resistance, this person continued to confide in him. Going through the list again, Hermione made mental notes of those she thought were the likely target: Professors Flitwick, Hagrid, Lupin, and Mr. Weasley.

Mr. Weasley had Molly to speak to. Hermione could not believe that he would speak to Severus about something so personal. Also, he did not fit the profile of having unlimited access to Severus. Next was Professor Flitwick. Out of everyone, Hermione knew him the least and really did not care one way or the other about his condition. No, she felt that the wizard in question had to know her very well and would therefore feel uncomfortable having her as a Therapist. Next there was Hagrid. She loved the half-giant, and he was a possibility. But he was engaged to Madam Maxime, and from what she had heard, visited with her every weekend at Beauxbatons Academy. That didn't sound like the behavior of someone suffering from Erectile Dysfunction. Now, Professor Lupin. He was about the age when some men experience ED, but she was skeptical. Last night she had definitely felt sexual vibes from him. Not that he would ever do anything to encourage her. He was too good for that. And she recalled that he did squirm in his seat after she enlightened him on his sexual appeal, especially his animal magnetism. But he did fit the other criteria Hermione surmised were necessary. The wizard in question had to have easy access to Severus and had to know Hermione very well. Hermione realized that it must be him.

"Hermione," Severus called, trying to get her attention.

"Oh, I'm sorry, Severus. Let's see, yes, if your acquaintance refuses to bond, refuses to see me, and refuses to visit a Muggle Therapist, then I cannot help you. I mean, him."

"What about if you give me the therapy, and I in turn pass it along to him?" Severus asked while seeming completely uninterested.

This bizarre request made Hermione continue her investigation: Severus had refused to allow her to leave his chambers on two occasions during this meeting. That would mean that he was, on some level, invested in the outcome. Maybe he and Remus were lovers. That would definitely make him invested in the outcome. 'Would helping this acquaintance be enough of a motivation for him to take sessions on his behalf?' If he and Severus were sexual partners, that would be enough of a motivation, and if she were in his predicament, and it was her lover who was impotent, she would do anything to make it work again. This possible revelation into Severus' motivation disheartened her as she held onto her fantasy that one day she and Severus would become lovers.

"Severus, this is all too peculiar and unconventional. There is no way that I can provide therapy to you for you to pass it along. Therapy is not a one-way treatment. It's not like giving an injection..."

"Giving an injection?"

"Forget it. I mean it's not like providing a potion, and the other person only need drink it. Therapy is an exchange of thoughts and emotions. It's an interaction, an intercourse of ideas and a giving of advice and behavior modification techniques based solely on the previous exchanges. I focus my clinical skills on helping men, individually or with their partner, either male or female, deal more effectively with their sexual expression. This is not something that can be done with a mediator!"

Hermione was frustrated on more than one level. She was in need of the sexual release she'd been denied last night, and now she was almost certain the object of her desire was the partner of the man suffering from impotence. Hermione surmised that was perhaps the reason why Severus almost had sex with her last night. He was most likely suffering from lack of release and intimacy. Probably also why he'd stopped himself and remain faithful to Remus.

"Severus, you may share with your friend that I can provide sessions to him *and* his partner." Just when she saw he was about to respond, she couldn't stop her impulsive and intrusive nature and asked, "Severus, are you this partner?"

"Madam, I assure you that I am as heterosexual as they come. I have never shagged a man, never kissed a man, and never touched a man in a sexual manner. I am a lover of women." Hermione observed that Severus was on a roll, and nothing she could do would be able to stop his diatribe. But this was interesting, and she certainly wasn't going to interrupt him.

"I love their smiles, their hair, the feel of their skin, their lips, eyes, ears, breasts, hands, arses, and legs. Their entire bodies are like a delicacy to be savored and devoured, slowly and completely. When I'm with a woman, tasting every inch of her is neither a chore nor a charitable act. It is a necessity for me to taste every drop and lick every part of her. Women are, to me, a gift to be treasured and devoured. Their sexual excitement is like the nectar of the Gods. I love to smell them... to feel them. I love to have a woman tied to my bed, squirming underneath me, begging for release. I love to taste her and feel myself enter her depths. Nothing can possibly compare to the sensations of taking a woman, making her scream my name, having her ride me, and being in control of her sensations. I love women, Dr. Granger, and I am offended that you do not know that, considering your professional training, and especially considering your personal experience with me last night.

"Madam," Severus' attack seemed to be winding down, "I am not sure you are able to adequately and effectively provide therapy if you are so completely mistaken about me."

While his impassioned speech created a pool in her panties, it was a bit too over the top. His ardent protesting would've impressed the ordinary witch or wizard, but she was trained in the most sophisticated psychotherapy treatment modalities America had to offer, and this level of protesting was just a cover-up for his repressed sexuality. That was covered in Psychology 101.

'Buttons and more buttons, now it all makes sense.' Hermione reflected on Severus' chosen attire with the enthusiasm that can only come from experiencing a classroom lecture coming to life.

Hermione observed Severus' wide eyes, and what he said next surprised even her.

"Hermione, I apologize for my attack on your profession. But, please, Hermione, I want to try anything to help Remus. Oh, I'm sorry, I never should've said his name." Severus hung his head down and continued, "He has misplaced his trust in me, and I will never feel worthy of his confidence again."

Hermione just stared at him.

'Who the fuck just said that?' Hermione could not believe her ears! This man speaking before her was not the Severus Snape she knew, or the one she had come to love and hate. This man was an imposter. Maybe it was someone using Polyjuice Potion. No, it could not be, as they'd sat together for over an hour, both drinking only tea.

"Please," Severus begged, "there is no one else who can help him. I do what I can to listen to him and give him advice. But you are his best bet. He doesn't want you or anyone else to know that he is impotent. He is a proud and arrogant man, and he cannot have his secret exposed."

Hermione just stared at the imposter in front of her. No, this was not an imposter in terms of magical intervention. This was an imposter based solely on Slytherin cunning and deceit!

'Severus is the "acquaintance"! He is the one who is impotent!'

'Oh my God!' Hermione mentally exclaimed. 'It all makes sense now! Severus is attracted to me; Severus is the one whose erection I couldn't feel when he was ravishing me; Severus is the one who immediately pulled away from me when I pulled him against me; Severus is the one who had a lame excuse as to why he could not have sex with me; Severus is the one who invented another lame excuse when the first one didn't work; Severus is the one who asked me down here; Severus is the one who won't let me leave his chambers until I agree to help his *friend*; Severus is the one who is acting like a freaking syrupy nut, wanting to desperately help his*friend*!'

If he wanted to play a game, Hermione was going to take the lead. She would be in control of this chess game Severus had initiated.

"Yes, Severus. I can clearly see how invested you are in helping your *friend*. I will help you to help him. I can see how much you care about your *friend*, and I am glad to know that you care so much about someone."

"Yes, yes, yes, well, I'm only doing this to keep him from bombarding me for advice. Of course, as a virile man, I do not have the experience to give him proper advice in this area of his condition."

Hermione brandished him a large, toothy smile.

"So, shall we get started, Hermione?" Severus asked, seemingly eager to begin treatment.

"No, Severus, I need to get to my office soon. I am sure that I have several owls waiting for me with messages. Also, prior to our beginning treatment, we have the matter of payment to discuss."

"Payment?"

"Well, surely you can understand that I need to have payment for each session we conduct for your friend. I would not normally ask, if my business were already successful, but since I am still trying to get it off the ground, I do need to insist."

"Why, of course, Hermione," Severus began, using his non-interested tone. "You shall be paid for every session you conduct with me. I am sure that you are well worth every Knut. You can invoice me for every session; is that sufficient?"

"Actually, I am worth every Galleon. But yes, let me return to my office, and I will submit the first invoice with our contract for a minimum of 10 sessions. In my experience, nothing less will be adequate for a successful outcome. In our case, we may need many more sessions since we are working through a mediator--you--but we can bill the subsequent sessions on a session by session basis."

"Yes, that sounds fine. When shall we begin?" Severus' mind was obviously determined to set a date.

"Severus, I'm just a bit concerned that Remus is not able to afford my services."

"Oh, don't worry yourself about that, I will ensure that you are paid in full upon receipt of your invoices."

"You will pay for them?" Hermione ensured to add a bit of whimsy and consideration to her tone.

"Yes, well, it's fine. I will pay anything to keep Remus off my back."

"Well then, Severus, I shall keep that in mind as I create my invoice." Hermione smirked and continued. "Okay, we can begin as soon as Monday if you'd like? You can meet me at my office at 4:00 p.m...."

"No, no. As this is not treatment for me, I refuse to be seen at your office. As discreet as I'm sure it is, I refuse to have any part of these conversations outside of my chambers. In here, I can ward to my heart's content and ensure my privacy. No, I must insist that you come to me, and Mondays after dinner is the best time."

"Very well then, Severus. In the spirit of cooperation, I will concede to giving you the treatment for you to pass along to your friend, and I will concede and meet you in your chambers at 8:00 p.m. every Monday evening. Is that acceptable?"

"Very much so."

"You are a good friend, Severus. I hope your witch recognizes you for the wonderful man you are. She is lucky indeed."

And with that declaration of his sweetened nature, she gave him a peck on the cheek and departed via his Floo, all the while calling him every foul name she knew.

'The arrogant son of a bitch! He's going to pay for trying to deceive me. The narcissistic, self-indulgent bastard! I will make him squirm for me, desire me so passionately that he will rue the day he decided to swindle me. Yes, I will teach him not to mess with Dr. Hermione Granger!'

To Be Continued...

A/N: THANKS to Jackie, my first beta, and to the brilliant Wartcap for the re-beta. Hugs to Wartcap for your wonderful enthusiasm! You give my muse life.

THANKS to SiriusWoman, who gave me the idea to charge Severus for the sessions! You rock!

Tixymol = Tylenol (America)

Paracetamol = Acetaminophen (America)

Did you notice that this was the first chapter written in Hermione's POV?

Now, I hope you don't mind but I'm using some real cheesy ideas (on purpose):

Hermione loves Lord & Taylor and Louis Vuitton - well, so do I.

Severus not knowing about Tixymol, or about 'injections' - why would he?

Severus' lame excuses (last chapter) - he's a man after all.

Severus with his "My *friend* has a problem" excuse - he's a man after all.

Severus' over the top denial that he is homosexual - apparently, he has some issues!

and Hermione's "sophisticated American psychotherapy training" - that was just a jab at my field.

Has any other story imagined Hagrid's penis? That piece sent shivers down my spine, and I wasn't completely grossed out! ****blushing****

THANKS for reading and reviewing! Go ahead, tell me what you think, I don't bite... all that much.

If you didn't like it... relax, at least you didn't have to pay for it!

Come see the inner workings of my mind. It's not always pretty in there so consider yourself warned:

<http://www.gryffindorknowitall.blogspot.com/>

Slytherin Tactics

Chapter 5 of 15

Severus experiences Erectile Dysfunction. Hermione is a Sex Therapist. Will she be able to cure him?

"IT looks normal," Severus said aloud to himself as he held his penis, made fully erect by his practiced hand.

He was showering after a difficult night of much contemplation and little sleep. Frustrated with IT's lack of performance, he lay in bed thinking of how to manipulate the situation to his satisfaction. His priority at the moment was to get IT working again. Hermione was the only solution he had at present, unless he wanted to bind. And that was one thing Severus knew he would never do. He was forty-six years old and had no plans on being manipulated, controlled, hoodwinked, ramshackled, instructed, commanded, directed, ruled, dominated, swayed, demanded of, or made to obey. He was his own power, his own authority. He was independent and relied on no one.

He was a Slytherin... the Head of Slytherin House, and he would never disregard the Slytherin tactics he agreed to abide by. They were his mantra, his code for living, his philosophy, and his rules of engagement. He was a one-man army, armed to fight the world against complacency, normality, and commonness. His trademark scowl, his domineering attitude, even his clothing down to the color of his socks was significant to him. He was unique. He was his own man. He was a Slytherin!

He was down, but he was not out! Severus knew that he would survive this personal attack. Whether by God's design or by the chance elements of the universe, he was destined to outwit life's cruel turn of events. No, he would have to take control of this situation and develop and carry out his battle plans. After all, Severus felt as if he were in the battle of his life. Granted, not having an erection was definitely not tantamount to a death sentence, but why would he want to live if he could not feel the depths of a woman again?

With his attitude firmly in charge, he successfully completed his ministrations and was pleased with the outcome. 'So, IT isn't dead after all,' a satisfied Severus reflected. It seemed the damned thing was unpredictable to say the least, even by his own hand. He was relieved nonetheless to be able to find release after a frustrating two weeks, memories of which were best left to the breath of a Hungarian Horntail than to the safe confines of a Pensieve.

The night before, Severus had returned to his chambers and been rather pleased with himself for deceiving the sensuous wench. He thought he'd done a rather good job at making her believe he was attached to another witch. It had been a little tricky convincing her of that while also leaving the door open for a possible future encounter. But he was certain of his victory.

Regardless of his certainty, one thing he knew for sure, though, was that his head was pounding--surely due in part to last night's overindulgence--but he also knew that it was due to the stress and frustration that had been building up in his system and was never released... well, at least until this morning, thank God! And even then, he would prefer to experience relief while enjoying the body of a sensuous woman than by his hand. But relief was relief and as it stood, or didn't, in his case, he would take it any way he could get it... by a woman, his hand, and even by the aptly named blast of a Blast-Ended Skrewt to bring IT to life.

Bath towel firmly in place and wrapped around his waist, Severus went to his lab, just off of his chambers, to work on creating the Hangover Potion he was so desperately in need of. It wasn't a difficult potion to make, but it was a bit tedious, as it needed to be consumed fresh. This wasn't a potion that he could make vats of and store for later use. If that were the case, he would gladly be a drunk.

He felt masculine and virile. 'Nothing like an orgasm to start the day off right.' As Severus maneuvered around the lab creating his potion, his heightened senses were aware of the sensuous feel of the now damp towel wrapped around his body and the sexual stimulation he experienced as his movements caused the towel to brush against his flesh.

'This is the way a Snape should feel.'

Not emasculated, weakened and powerless. That was not a position he liked to be in, and he would do anything and everything in his power to make sure that it didn't happen again. He was a Snape and a Slytherin! He would maintain his independence and his bachelorhood and not bind just to fix this problem. No, he would make sure that Hermione would do whatever it was that she now *does* to help him REGAIN CONTROL OF HIS SEX LIFE. But without her knowing that it was he who needed this treatment. He wasn't foolish after all.

'That wench really has a flair for fitting slogans,' he thought as he completed his potion and left it to cool while he went to his chambers to dress.

He had meant to go to the Great Hall for breakfast, but with waking up late and having a headache the size of Hagrid's arse, he decided that staying in and creating a Headache Potion would be the best way to use his time. He only hoped that he would be ready in time to meet with Hermione immediately following breakfast.

~*~

Severus became aware that even rushing to dress, he would not make it in time to the Great Hall for breakfast. Bewildered by his continued misfortune, Severus resigned himself to missing his appointment with Hermione and began to contemplate how he would find her, as she was probably on her way back to London. His thoughts were interrupted by a knock on his chamber door.

Relief flooded his body and his regulatory system went haywire as he felt simultaneously hot and cool. 'Strange feeling, really,' Severus thought to himself as he welcomed Hermione into his chambers. 'Really heady feeling....'

'Um, heady... I could use more heady.' Severus' salacious thoughts were interrupted by Hermione asking something about going somewhere else to talk. 'Wench is mad if she thinks I would discuss anything of this nature out of the confines of my well-warded walls.'

Quick thinking as he was, Severus put his Slytherin tactics into action and, using the illusion of honesty and sincerity, he welcomed her into his chambers and indicated in his best possible heartfelt voice, which was seldom used, that he was pleased she was there.

And, in his own way, he was pleased that she was there. But it was best to plan his movements tactically.

Severus was sure that she was engaging in her own brand of tactical maneuvers, with her chosen style of dress revealing her bosom for the all the world to see. Gryffindor tactics... sounded like an oxymoron. Honesty and tomfoolery bravery didn't have anything to do with strategy and manipulation.

'This is going to be so easy.' Severus was pleased with the task at hand and his success was on the horizon. 'She has no idea how to play this game.'

While engaging in some ridiculous and petty conversation about Muggle medication with a witch who had apparently forgotten that she was a witch, and ogling her cleavage as she surely intended him to, Severus noticed something on her bosom that was oddly similar in color to her skin tone, but whose shape seemed out of place to their distinct roundness.

Attempting to keep up with their conversation, yet fascinated by this mysterious discovery, he handed her a dose of the Hangover Potion. He prided himself on catching her in her vain attempts to use her measly Gryffindor tactics on him. She was so obvious it was almost pitiful. Her statement about making potions designed to increase sexual pleasure and stimulation...

'What the hell is she going to do with lubricants for a headache?' Severus boasted, realizing her poor attempts to get him sidetracked. 'Is she going to rub herself to climax every time she has a headache?'

Severus was interrupted by Hermione as he was lost in thought, *sidetracked*, if you will, imagining the chit masturbating. 'The bitch won't get me again!'

Unable to concentrate on anything but the mysterious object on her bosom, Severus decided that a closer inspection was in order. After retrieving the glass that held her dose of the Hangover Potion, he returned, handing her a cup of tea, and took the opportunity to investigate the mysterious object on her chest.

'Could it be a mole, an off-centered nipple... or possibly the Dark Lord is alive and living in Hermione's bosom? Well, it's got to be more comfortable than taking residence in someone's head.' After closer inspection, Severus realized that Hermione had a rather large piece of scrambled egg on her chest.

'Maybe she's saving it for later.'

Not caring for this unappetizing addition to her otherwise luscious breasts, Severus decided that he could no longer stare at her bosom, as he was concentrating on the egg instead of the roundness it rested between.

"Hermione," Severus said bravely, "you have some breakfast on your chest."

Severus was surprised when Hermione didn't respond by removing the offending item, as she seemed lost in thought. Not knowing what to do now or what to say, Severus chose to speak directly to her bosom. "Well, sorry, breasts, but it seems like you're destined to double as Hermione's plate."

The damned egg held his attention, and he was unable to concentrate on anything. Deciding to give it one more try, he cleared his throat so as to ensure his next statement was heard and understood.

"Hermione, as uncomfortable as this makes me..."

This raving lunatic, who just moments before was a normal, yet distracted Hermione, cut him off. 'What the hell? She seems adamant for the egg to remain nestled in her bosom... maybe she's into culinary sex?' Severus asked himself, not even fully understanding what the hell he meant by that.

Then Hermione graciously brought light to the otherwise darkened and confused game she was playing.

'Ah, yes, so that's it. Hermione was preoccupied with memories of us last night. Yes, she wants me. She wants this body. She wants IT.' Severus was in his element. This was more like it. Hermione had exposed herself and now lay bare before him, so to speak.

"Madam," Severus said in his practiced sultry tones, "apparently I know what your mind is on." He had caught her in her meager attempts to beat him at a game she was poorly matched for, and he was absolutely pleased with himself!

~*~

Although Severus was enjoying having the upper hand with Hermione, he was eager for her to do her thing and fix his problem. Utilizing stealth and deceit as part of his Slytherin tactics, he introduced the situation to her as emotionlessly and uninterested as he could. To his dismay, she got up to leave after expressing her interest in helping his friend. She was leaving him very little wiggle room to maneuver. It was time to change tactics, get her to stay, and finally convince her to give him the treatment.

Hermione began talking about Muggle medication for this condition, and he was quite intrigued until she mentioned side effects--something about death and her not recommending it. If he were going to end up dead as a result of his condition, Severus would be damned if his death would not come by his own hands, even if he ended up strangling IT. There was no way he would use Muggle medication, as apparently their side effects were anything but benign. Asinine Muggles.

Hermione was definitely full of surprises. Next, she almost left again. 'It's like she's desperate to leave and get away from me,' Severus thought, and was astonished by a quick, yet all too discomforting, pang of jealousy, wondering who she was in such a rush to see.

He would need to be more direct with her to get her to stay with him. He boldly recommended that in order to help his friend, the only course of action seemed to be for her to give him the treatment, and he would pass it along to his friend. She didn't seem to like that idea either, and he was quickly running out of tactical options.

The next Hermione Surprise Special came in the form of her accusing him of being a homosexual! How dare that chit... that wench think anything of the sort. Severus was outraged! He took the defensive attack position and began explaining to the wench exactly what it was that he loved about women; in varying detail he outlined his preferences and his delights. Before he could stop himself, he was denouncing her ability to do her job accurately, and as the words were coming out of his mouth, he was anxious that she would walk away and leave him with IT as unpredictable as ever.

Now it was time for Severus to pull out the big guns and employ his most severe Slytherin tactic. He continued his deceit, but this time feigned the virtues of honesty, compassion, and human kindness.

"Hermione, I apologize for my attack on your profession. But please, Hermione, I want to try anything to help," Severus placed extra care to make sure the next part came out with deliberate ease, "...Remus. Oh, I'm sorry, I never should've said his name." Hanging his head low, he felt, added to the general effect. "He has misplaced his trust in me, and I will never feel worthy of his confidence again."

She just stared at him, and he was sure that he nailed his performance! He could tell that she was just taken aback by his sincerity and his eagerness to help his fellow man. This was going to work! He solidified it with one final plea, and she was like putty in his hands.

After some brief discussions of payment and his ensuring that all sessions took place in his well-warded chambers, he was ready for some fixing! But the wench pulled a Surprise Special again. While conceding to his many demands, she was adamant that she needed to leave and the sessions could not begin immediately. Again, Severus wondered whom Hermione was running off to meet. She claimed that she anticipated having many owed messages waiting for her. Severus didn't buy that lame excuse for one minute. She was escaping. There was no other way to describe it. She was definitely taken by his charms, that much was clear. During their discussion, it had also been clear that she had been daydreaming of their brief encounter the night before. She wanted him; he could feel it. But nothing he could think of, other than another wizard, could explain why she was so eager to leave.

After Hermione left via his Floo, Severus contemplated his next plan of attack. While not necessary, as he had already fooled her into giving him the treatment in order to assist his *friend*, he felt a new challenge coming over the horizon. He would get IT working again and have her. He would make sure that she would fall head over heels for him and leave this wizard who apparently held her attentions.

"Yes," Severus said aloud to no one, "I will make sure that by the end of every session, I have her drooling for me. She will not want to leave to go to him."

Unbeknownst to him, Hermione was planning her own offensive maneuvers.

To Be Continued...

A/N:

As always a humungous THANK YOU to Jackie, my first beta, and to the Mighty Wartcap for the re-beta!

No harm was meant to the poor scrambled egg. And my apologies for calling it "the offending item."

"Headache the size of Hagrid's arse." - HOW I LOVE THAT! Sorry, I'm my only source of entertainment sometimes.

Slytherin tactics were modified by Niccolo Machiavelli's *The Prince*.

Hermione's To-Do List

Chapter 6 of 15

Severus experiences Erectile Dysfunction. Hermione is a Sex Therapist. Will she be able to cure him?

As Hermione prepared to meet with Severus, she was full of mixed emotions. On the one hand she was overjoyed, as this was her very first session with her very first client. On the other hand, she was going to be with Severus... in private...

In his chambers...

Alone...

Hermione was uncertain as to how she was going to deal with this situation, and more importantly, how her traitorous body would react to being so near that hunk of an egotistical, son of a bitch bastard.

She had been so desperate to get away from him on Saturday morning. It had been like she couldn't trust herself to be in the same room with him. Her body had been on fire. She'd been so turned on that she could've used her body to power her own Muggle vibrator.

'I'm a grown woman; I should be able to control my body better than this. I can't allow him to affect me this way. My God, I'm a Therapist, a *Sex Therapist* at that! I know the art of seduction, I know all about temptation, desire, need and want. And for all that I know, I need to learn self-control and restraint!'

Why the hell was she attracted to the git, anyway? For years, while she'd been in school, the boys had referred to him as 'the greasy git of the dungeons,' and while she abhorred speaking ill of those in authority who deserved respect simply by their station and position, secretly Hermione had been in agreement. Professor Snape had treated her badly.

Then again, he treated everyone badly. He was an 'Equal Opportunity Bastard.'

It was not easy for her to understand why she had fallen for Severus; maybe with some therapy, the epidemiology of her current *Snape Obsession* could be analyzed and dissected like an illness waiting to be cured. Self-psychoanalysis was wrought with complications of counter-transference, where the therapist was unable to delineate what was fact and emotion based on her own experiences instead of those of her client.

'Am I attracted to him because of his physical attributes or because he reminds me of a former lover with whom I have unfinished emotional ties?'

'Consciously, I don't know the answer to this question. He may remind me of someone that I used to know or that I currently know. He doesn't remind me of my father; at least, I don't think so. My father is kind, gentle, and warm. He is engaging and strong in his own quiet way. Severus is almost the antithesis of Dad. He is rude, rough, and cold. He is detached and powerful.'

'That is it, isn't it?'

Hermione's dad and Severus were alike in the most basic and fundamental ways. They were both powerful figures in her life. Her dad, the most powerful man in her life while growing up, could do anything and everything. He, with his gentle nature, kept her safe and made her feel protected. Severus, in his days as double-agent, also kept her safe and made her feel protected. Maybe not the warm and fuzzy protection she felt with her father, but she knew him to be a strong and powerful wizard, whose mission was to protect the side of Light while maintaining himself, ensconced in the dangerous liaisons of the Dark.

So, while psycho-analysis on oneself is not the wisest of actions, Hermione felt fairly confident that she had located the genesis of her attraction to Severus. And while some of the "lick" factor remained ingrained into her psyche regarding little girls falling in love with their fathers, it was a professional's understanding that fathers are the first loves of their little girls... if Freud was to be believed.

'This is what happens with one too many psychology classes. I must really be in a bad way.'

~*~

As Hermione prepared to dress for her first session with her client, well, not so much her client, but with Severus, who was pretending not to be the client, but who in reality was her client, while pretending to be the messenger for the real client, who was Remus, who in actuality was not the real client, but the unsuspecting ruse for the real client, who was Severus, who was the object of her affections, but who she couldn't let on to that she desired him nor could she let on that he was the true object of her treatment...

And all of this drama for a shag.

No, Hermione was not looking for love, for romance, or for marriage. She was looking to bed the professor. He had been on her 'To-Do' list since seventh year. Having lost her virginity to Ron's fumbling, she'd begun experimenting with Harry, who at first had been mortified but thankfully had come around to Hermione's explanation of her need to practice and improve her skills. He was soon as concerned with his performance and his need to practice and improve as she was. They were both very studious, but were quick to acknowledge their need to remain friends and not form any romantic relationship. This arrangement worked out very well for both parties, and since the summer after seventh year, they had not engaged in any other experimentation. She'd gone to America and Harry had remained at Grimmauld Place.

While these experiences with Harry had been educational and occasionally satisfying, she desired the touch of an experienced man. With all of her experimentation with Harry and her experiences throughout college, she had only had a handful of orgasms. It frightened her to think that she may never experience a fulfilling sex life. Her daydreams of Severus Snape had never waned since seventh year. Her favorite fantasy involved the Potions master and his beautiful, slender fingers massaging her core, bringing her to complete satisfaction time and time again.

He had been on her 'To-Do' list since then, and it was time to check off this item *ascompleted*.

To do so, she was determined to make him squirm for her. To desire her so deeply that he would rue the day he decided to manipulate and lie to her.

The contract had been completed and signed by Severus earlier that day via owl. She had made sure to charge him some additional expenses for preparation and travel for off-site sessions. She wanted Severus to pay figuratively and literally, and tonight she would earn her first Galleons, which she imagined mounting on her office wall, similar to what her parents had done when they'd earned their first pound.

~*~

With her Gryffindor courage firmly attached to her psyche, Hermione entered her Floo, head held high and chest forward. She called Severus's address and arrived before she could say 'Quidditch'.

"Hi, Severus!" Hermione said with a forced joviality designed to cover her anxiety.

"Hermione, what a pleasure to see you," Severus said with a deep, silky, yet sweet tone that did nothing for Hermione but remind her of the false prophet before her. "Please do come in."

'There goes that man again! This is not the Severus that wets my panties. He is supposed to be surly, arrogant, and powerful. That is his charm. That is what has me changing underwear more times than I brush my teeth. I want my egotistical bastard back!'

"Why, thank you, Severus. First off, I'd like to thank you for signing our contract and returning it to me so quickly. Your professional courtesy is truly appreciated," Hermione stated as she followed Severus' nonverbal message for her to seat herself where she desired.

Hermione chose to sit in one of the lounge chairs flanking the fireplace after noticing Severus claiming the other. 'This is a wonderful environment to conduct a session,' Hermione thought, as it seemed peaceful, uncluttered, and without distractions or, hopefully, intrusions.

Before Hermione could begin talking, Severus stood up, removed his wand from his sleeve and began warding his chambers.

Hermione heard the odd squelching noise accompanied by a Colloportus Charm sealing the door to his chambers. Among other charms, Hermione heard Severus cast the Fumunculus. Apparently he wanted any eavesdroppers to suffer boils. What a strange man.

Severus added the Imperturbable Charm, which was more customary for someone preventing eavesdropping; next he cast the Langlock, as another one of his strange attempts to make the eavesdropper suffer by fusing their tongue to the roof of their mouth. Hermione remembered that spell from sixth year, one of the many spells Harry had learned from his borrowed Potions textbook that, as it turned out, originally belonged to Snape. Severus added the Muffliato, another self-invented spell, a room-sealing spell, a Stealth Sensory Spell, which was placed on the door, and he topped it off with a Toenail-Growing Hex, designed to affect anyone within two meters of his door.

He truly was a paranoid man.

"Are you through now, Severus?" Hermione asked after what seemed like an eternity of watching this man ensure his privacy from witches, wizards, and apparently from any rodent or insect that happened by this way.

"Yes, ma'am. I would in no way allow anyone to know that I am in therapy, as of course it is not for me, but for Remus."

"And if it ever was for you, would you have something against therapy?" Hermione asked him, partly teasing and partly wanting to know what he truly felt about her profession of choice.

"Those with mental disorders, Miss Granger, belong in St. Mungo's, to be treated with Shock Spells." There was the Severus she knew. The bastard was coming around.

"Well, as you have no doubt prepared for our sessions, we should get started," Hermione mentioned as she took the proffered tea from Severus. "Before we begin, it is important for you to become comfortable with me and comfortable with my ability to assist you... I mean, Remus. Please know that I will answer any and all questions you may have now or later. My goal is to be of assistance to you... I mean, Remus."

"You, of course, know me, but you may not know that despite being a fairly new Psychologist, I have studied under an experienced therapist for the last three years, where I have served as the primary therapist for men, women, and couples." Hermione was so caught up in her little prepared speech that, while she doubted that Severus gave a crap about her experiences, she found that he was listening intently.

"Muggle?" Severus asked.

"Um, well, mostly Muggle, yes, but I did provide therapy for a married wizarding couple and helped them to achieve sexual intimacy."

"Why would a couple need to seek outside assistance for intimacy? It seems like a very simple thing to grab the wife and take her."

Hermione immediately dreaded being there. This was the Severus that she wanted. She wanted this powerful and controlling wizard. She was a powerful witch in her own right, but something about his primitive masculine nature made her squeak with excitement as the sexual tension built in her. She was never one to be subservient or even

to engage in S&M, but it seemed where Severus was concerned, she wanted him to have her, own her, take her and make her his. With him, she embraced her newly found sexual deviance.

"Sexual intimacy with a couple would revolve around what each person wants, needs, and desires. I then work with the couple to find a delicate balance between both of their wants, desires and needs. True sexual intimacy requires both partners to give pleasure and receive pleasure. 'Taking the wife,' as you put it, may or may not be what the wife desires."

"I understand, you may continue."

"Well, before we continue with our first session, do you have any questions of me to help you feel more comfortable with the process?"

"I have no questions, you may continue."

Hermione was getting nervous. He was passively involved. It seemed like all he wanted to do was kick back, relax, and be fixed. She decided to continue, as she was in a bit of a fix herself. This was her first real session, no supervisor to fall back on, nothing to guide her but her own education, experiences, and wits.

"First, I'd like to explain my role, and our journey together in this process. The psychology field recognizes that an active sex life is both an enjoyable and an important element of a healthy relationship. However, sometimes people encounter sexual problems at some point in their lives, preventing them from enjoying a fulfilling sexual relationship. There are lots of physical and emotional reasons why this can happen, such as stress, tiredness, illness, family and work pressures, and even a new baby. One or more of these reasons can be the genesis of your problems. I mean, Remus' problems. Lots of people find that their problems are time limited and don't last long. I am here to help you regain satisfaction with your sexual relationship... I mean, Remus' sexual relationship... thus reducing the length of your disorder. I'm sorry, I mean Remus' disorder. Oh, Severus, this is so confusing!"

With an exasperated look that mimicked hers, Severus agreed, "Yes, this is quite confusing, I agree."

"Well, it would help me to know that Remus would be getting most of my treatment, but to be honest, Severus, as it looks, you are not taking any notes. How can you effectively translate to him what I am sharing with you?"

"Ah, yes, of course, I have taken that into account and it seems logical to me that in order for Remus to get the full effect, he will have to experience it just as I am now."

"Um, well, yes, I agree, but Remus was adamant that I not know..."

"I have decided that after each session, I will save my memories in a Pensieve so that he can 'be here' and get their full effect."

"That's brilliant, Severus!" Hermione feigned her excitement. She was getting good at this.

"Yes, of course." Severus said with what Hermione perceived as his usual sense of self-importance. Normally this would be one of the things that made her horny as a banshee, but she knew that underneath this normal *Snape-esque* attitude lay a self-serving, lying bastard who was giving her the performance of his life. Well, she just wasn't going to allow him to get to her.

"Just one thing. While this is a vast improvement, please help him understand that he is still not getting the full effect, as therapy is an exchange of information, a conversation. It must be a give and take. And while he will receive my 'giving', I am unable to truly give to him what he deserves. Do you understand?"

"I'm not clear, would you please stop beating around the bush and be upfront, woman!" Severus was getting frustrated, and Hermione couldn't be more pleased. If getting him *this* upset was this simple, then her job was going to be super easy.

"With therapy, in order for me to help him improve his functioning, I would have to ask him questions and hear his answers in order to determine what direction to take next. In order to give Remus what he needs to get better, I will have to treat you as I would him. But you must have the answers to my questions as best you can determine Remus' situation to be."

"Yes, yes, yes, I understand! I thought we already agreed to this? The first session is half-way through, and we haven't even begun yet!"

"I can understand your frustration, though let me ease your mind by saying that the first session is typically longer than the rest," Hermione placated Severus, though she enjoyed seeing him seethe.

"Okay, well then, let's continue. Our sessions will take place weekly, for as long as we need to, with the understanding that it may take longer due to our unique circumstances..." Severus cut off Hermione in mid-sentence.

"Hermione, if I am to show these memories to Remus, he must not be aware that you are aware that I am not the intended patient. Please refrain from acknowledging that I am not the identified patient, although I appreciate your clear understanding that I could never be in that position."

"I think, Severus, that your proposal is sound and would make my job that much easier. I will treat you as my patient completely and I, of course, understand that you are a complete functioning male without inhibitions, let alone dysfunction. I've done nothing but think of you for the last several days." Hermione created a shy and demure facial expression sure to elicit impure thoughts on his part.

"Yes, well," Hermione heard Severus' obvious gulp as he suppressed his desire, "I am flattered, but we are here to get IT working again, so please get on with it."

"You mean get Remus functioning again, don't you?"

"Hermione, while you are perfectly aware that I am a sexual being, desirable and fully functional, I am here for Remus yet I must pretend to be something that I am not, and that is confusing enough without you adding to it."

"Very well." Hermione shifted in her seat, crossed her legs and allowed the material to gently cascade away and expose her knee and part of her upper and lower thigh. "Severus, if you have no further questions, please allow me to describe our journey together."

Hermione noticed Severus looking underneath the cross of her legs where the material had exposed her thigh. She was careful to scrub her body with scrubbing salts to smooth her skin. She also removed her hair, oiled her skin and wore no panties. She was ready for the art of seduction.

"I am here, Severus, to help you achieve harder and lasting erections. You are not the first and will not be the last wizard to be affected by Erectile Dysfunction. More than half of men over forty have difficulties getting or maintaining an erection. Our job together will be to figure out the genesis of the problem and work through it together in order to free your mind and body to become fully functional again so that you can enjoy your time with your witch, and your time alone during your self-pleasuring.

"A satisfied wizard has no need for self-pleasuring, Miss Granger." Severus' purr shot straight to Hermione's core.

"Yes, well, it is perfectly normal for people to engage in masturbation. It is pleasurable and only requires your hand and some personal time. It is an opportunity to think only of you. It allows one to reduce stress with the most pleasurable of releases." Hermione looked at Severus through her thick lashes, created a believable blush, and added, "I find masturbation most pleasurable, and I freely engage in this behavior as often as I can. It allows me to wake up in the morning refreshed and ready for a new day, it gives me renewed vigor in the afternoons, and allows me to go to bed and have a deep and relaxing sleep."

Hermione was pleased to notice a dumbfounded look on Severus' face as if he'd been hit with the Confundus Charm, "Hermione, that is three times a day."

"Yes, and where I can, I attempt to pleasure myself even more often. I enjoy sex, Severus, and I cannot always rely on having a partner to pleasure me. Even when I'm with a partner, I know my body better than he. I know how to touch myself, give myself that particular rub or pinch that would send me over the edge."

By this time Severus was practically salivating. His mouth was agape, and his hands were tightly tucked away underneath his robes in his groin. Whether IT responded to this banter or not, Severus was clearly excited.

"All of this is to say, Severus, that masturbation is a normal activity; it hurts no one and is most pleasurable. I can teach you how to pleasure yourself to obtain maximum satisfaction." Hermione seductively licked her lips, moistening them just so, and continued, "It requires the perfect touch that only you know, lubricants, and, on occasion, toys. Men often enjoy small vibrators that enter through the anus so that while they manually pleasure themselves, the vibrator stimulates the prostate, causing dramatic and wonderfully explosive orgasms. I've been witness to this, and it was all I could do not to become part of the fun," Hermione lied through her beautiful pearly whites. She had never shown anyone how to pleasure themselves, she had never pleased herself as often as she described, and she had never violated her Code of Ethics, which prevented a therapist from doing anything other than talk therapy with their patients.

Severus looked like he was hyperventilating. Hermione assumed that under his robes, where his hands had sneaked to hide, he was working himself into a frenzy. This was too much fun, and since he was not verbally responding, she decided to continue.

In a deeper voice that clearly betrayed her arousal, Hermione continued, "I've also had the pleasure of helping another male with his impotence, and we started with an inspection. Although I am not a medical doctor, it is important for me to do an examination of the man's genitals, thus allowing me to identify any medical concerns. In his case, I did not find any medical issues, but I was pleased to notice his reaction to my touch. He was aroused and we pursued his arousal through to completion." At this convincing lie, Severus' eyebrows shot up, and Hermione continued as if not noticing. "As it turned out, he was not impotent but was just not happy in his current relationship. While in session, he did not experience any dysfunction, but with his partner he was unable to perform. After much therapy it became clear that he could not perform with her because he held some resentment toward her, well, for his own reasons. Soon, she joined our sessions, and I taught him how to pleasure her, and her to pleasure him, and soon he was functional in and out of session.

"As you see, Severus, part of my interaction with a client is an examination to determine the level and severity of his dysfunction. Shall we?"

"Shall we what, madam?" Severus looked like he was about to bolt out of his chambers, had he not warded them so effectively.

"An examination, Severus. It's an integral part of my treatment." At this statement, Hermione removed herself from her seat, and within two strides she was in front of Severus, hand extended, inviting him to allow her to pull him up and out of his chair.

To her shock and dismay, he allowed her to pull him up! Hermione didn't know what to do. She had never given anyone an inspection and wouldn't even know how to begin an inspection. She could not allow her Gryffindor courage to wane. She was a lioness, and she had to be brave with the master of Slytherin cunning and deceit.

Swallowing hard and shaking lightly, Hermione asked Severus to disrobe and thankfully, he refused. Hermione did not know what she would have done had he followed her direction. Well, she knew what she wanted to do, but she still had plans to make him suffer.

"Severus, please, I assure you that in order for me to begin treatment, we need to conduct an examination."

"Just what are you looking for? I can provide you with the information you seek."

"Well, that is not nearly as thorough as we need to be, but we shall continue as best we can. You will need to stand up, expose yourself and follow my instructions. I shall turn around to provide you with a modicum of privacy."

Hermione turned around and focused on the painting above the fireplace of the Slytherin crest. As she looked at the crest, she imagined her Gryffindor lion swallowing the snake whole and licking her fingers. Yes, she intended to swallow his snake and win this battle. And in the end, she hoped there was enough of the snake left to swallow in the most pleasurable of ways.

"Hermione, what would you like to know?" Severus said, quite exasperated.

Pulled out of her fantasy, Hermione responded with the beginning guess of her examination. "Severus, first, is there any marked difference in your genitalia?"

"No."

"Are you circumcised?"

"Yes."

"Okay, please follow my instructions carefully and maneuver your hands as if they were mine. Ready?"

"Yes."

"Imagine my holding onto your penis and beginning to rub your shaft from tip to base over the top, and from the bottom base to tip. I am... Severus, are you moving your hands as I've instructed?"

"Yes."

"Next I rub the tip of your penis, around and around, feeling for anything odd, any bumps, abrasions, or stiffness or thickening of the epidermis. Next, simulate the same motions over and around your testes. Are you doing it?"

"Yes."

"Do you find anything out of sorts?"

"No."

"Next, I must understand if you are responsive. With my touch, I would need to examine you for sexual stimulation."

"And just how do you plan on doing that, Miss Granger?" Severus purred, and Hermione immediately became concerned for her maintaining command of her body, as he sounded quite stimulated already.

"Severus, I will close my eyes if I must. Please walk toward me and I will complete the examination. I promise to be quick."

It seemed like an eternity before Hermione heard another noise in the well-warded room. It was just their breathing, keeping her aware that she was not alone, and that both were quite stimulated. An examination seemed for naught at the present. She kept quiet, waiting for Severus to make a decision. Her life seemed like it was in his hands at the moment. Her courage was waning, and she was now dependent on the snake's next move.

Hermione, with her eyes closed, turned around upon hearing Severus walk toward her. Placing a hand on her shoulder, he guided her toward him, and his hand held her steady. With his other hand, he gently grabbed her right hand and motioned it toward his body. Hermione was shaking, and she knew that he knew. As much as she wanted to conceal her discomfort, there was no hiding her anxiety as she waded in new, treacherous waters.

Hermione felt the heat radiating off of his body, and it felt like together they could melt the polar caps. She reached out and found his shaft, and she was surprised to find it

hard and waiting for her touch. Hermione's heart immediately panicked and wondered if her theory had been correct. The physical evidence was clear, he was standing before her with no evidence of dysfunction.

"Severus, um, before I..." she could hardly breathe but fought herself to continue, "now that I am here and touching... I mean examining you, please allow me to do the initial exam before the final stimulation test."

"I will allow it."

Remembering the instructions she had given him to follow, using her both hands, she immediately began feeling his genitals for any obvious abnormalities. After gaining her breath back, her mind seemed to clear, and she decided that, hell, since she was in this situation, and she literally held him in the palm of her hands, she was going to enjoy him.

Her maneuvers were slow and deliberate. During her examination, though her eyes remained closed, she realized that at some point she had bent down on her knees to ease her movements. His body was mere inches from her face and, although attempting to feign clinical maneuvers, she was enjoying herself and was certain the blush on her face betrayed her. *Impressed* she was with what she felt. She wasn't an expert in terms of size for a man, but in her limited experiences, she was certain that he was the largest man she had ever held in her hands.

"What to do now, Miss Granger?" Severus said in such a low and husky voice that it was difficult to concentrate on anything other than taking him in her mouth. That would make an interesting stimulation test indeed. But Hermione was stumped. What stimulation test could she employ that would keep her cover while making it interesting for both?

"Although I haven't seen you, from my touch, I find no abnormalities present. Has there been any change in color?"

"No change."

"Um, well, Severus, as you are in an aroused state..."

"Yes, I've noticed."

"I'm sorry, I hope I haven't made you uncomfortable with this process."

"You have not, but I thought that was part of your examination? Does this mean that you are finished?"

Hermione was about to say that she indeed was finished with her examination, but it became clear that the phallus she held in her hand, while aroused, held some extra skin at the base and was not as hard as she suspected it could become. Serving as confirmation that Severus was indeed the *friend* she'd suspected him to be all along, she decided to prolong her examination and see it through the final test.

Hermione felt a deep sense of lust arise in her knowing that the large penis she felt in her hands had the potential to become even larger. This man was a girl's favorite dream, and she was determined to see him.

"Severus, to complete our examination, please relax and I will stimulate you to get a clear understanding of your ability to obtain and maintain an erection."

"Shall we go to a more comfortable position, Hermione?"

"Yes, of course, may I open my eyes?"

"No, but let me guide you." Severus held her hand as she stood up, and he slowly walked her around and to the side of the lounge. He pressed her gently back, and she sat on the sofa, and he soon followed sitting next to her.

"Is this comfortable for your stimulation test?"

"Um, yes it is, thank you."

With her eyes closed, she reached out and found Severus' arm, and she slowly followed his arm up toward his chest. She languidly ran her hand down his chest, taking time to stimulate his nipples to hardened peaks. Seeking her prize, she delved lower and lower until she found his aroused shaft. She sat closer to him with her body turned toward him and found a rhythm she was comfortable with. She was wet in anticipation of having him inside her, but knew that today was not to be the day. She squirmed in place, trying to find her own pleasure. Before she knew it, both of them were panting heavily, and she took the chance to take a peek at what she had been privileged to feel but not see. He was glorious to her. It was amazing to see this man, exposed and aroused by her hand. All she wanted was to rise up on her knees, lift her dress and take him deeply. Her own gyrations became erratic as she found herself at the crest of her own orgasm, and before she came down from her climax, she felt the warm ooze of Severus' orgasm on her hand. She continued her ministrations more slowly to ensure that he was fully sated, and then she stopped, although never removing her hands.

"And what, pray tell, have you learned, Miss Granger?" Severus asked as he removed her hand from his body and performed a Cleaning Spell on her hands.

"I have learned that you have no obvious medical issues of which to be concerned about, and that you are able to obtain and maintain an erection through to completion."

"So, how many is that for you today?"

"Pardon?" Hermione asked, still foggy from her own climax.

"Orgasms, Hermione. You had an orgasm. I was watching you, and it was rather exciting to see you touch me and find your own release. So, my question remains, how many is that for you today?"

"Oh, well, sorry about that. That is not supposed to happen. It's really not supposed to happen."

"While I allowed you your little game, Miss Granger, I would like to remind you that examining me was not needed nor warranted considering that Remus is your patient. Be clear that I allowed this for my own pleasure. Thank you, it was most agreeable." He was gloating as only he could. Hermione heard the dismissal and prepared to take her leave.

"Yes, of course." Hermione stood up and removed herself from his sofa while he remained seated. While smoothing down her dress to remove the wrinkles only she saw, she noticed the evidence of her climax on Severus' leather sofa. Severus followed her gaze and with a grin that bespoke of winning the grand prize, he used a finger to pick up as much moisture as the finger would hold and, to Hermione's surprise, brought it to his mouth and licked his finger clean.

Hermione looked at him with hooded, lust-filled eyes, and he approached her slowly. He brought his finger to her mouth and, in one motion, placed his finger in her mouth, mixed with her own juices and his climax. She hadn't noticed him scooping some of his own climax onto his fingers, but he had, she recognized the taste. Her immediate response was to take him, right then, forget the battle, forget winning this incessant game. She needed this man; she needed to check this off of her To-Do list.

Hermione flung herself at him, and they each began sucking on the other as if they would never find release with another. As Hermione began clawing at him to disrobe him, he held her hands taut, looked into her deep brown eyes and said, "This is enough, Miss Granger. Please return next week prepared to give Remus his second session, and please refrain from pawing me. Really, it is unbecoming and quite beneath you."

Smile firmly in place, Hermione realized what had happened. She felt like she once again held the upper hand. He initially allowed her to touch him because IT had responded. But now that he had climaxed, he was unable to obtain another erection. It was a typical reaction for a man with impotence. She flashed her bright smile at him and said, "This was most pleasurable, Severus. Thank you for your time; I shall return next Monday for our second session. Your homework, Severus..."

"Homework?"

"Yes, your homework is to bring yourself to completion, by yourself, a minimum of five times by the time we meet again in one week's time."

Hermione moved over to the Floo and said, "Goodnight, Severus, and when you see Remus, please tell him to expect an owl from me. I'd rather like to meet with him privately and perhaps attend to examining my real patient. Pleasant dreams."

And with that final blow, she was gone. This was going to be a long, drawn out game, but she intended to come out on top literally and figuratively.

To Be Continued...

A/N:

1. As always, I must acknowledge Jackie, my first beta, and the Mighty Wartcap for the re-beta.
2. I'd also like to take time to acknowledge my friend SiriusWoman, who allowed me to think this story through and has given me some great ideas!
3. I want to apologize to any Therapist out there who reads this and is appalled by Hermione's behavior. All I can say is that this is a story! Get over it! A fictional story, and a fan fiction story to boot! I am a Therapist and while I would never go against my Code of Ethics, I am not Hermione. But, if Alan Rickman were my patient I would risk my license! Just kidding! ----- Well, not so much!
4. Can anyone guess anything interesting about the order of the Charms Severus placed on his chambers? **COME ON! IT'S NOT HARD!**
5. I hope no one is icked about my pairing Hermione with Ron and Harry in the past. I know a lot of SS/HG shippers don't like that. But hey, this is my story!
6. THANK YOU for reading and reviewing! You have all blown me away with this stories reception! I am grateful and humbled. No jokes here.
7. What will happen next? Will Hermione seek out Remus and perform an examination? How will she convince him? Will she use her wiles? Does she even have wiles?

What Good Comes of Plans

Chapter 7 of 15

Severus experiences Erectile Dysfunction. Hermione is a Sex Therapist. Will she be able to cure him?

Tuesday morning found Severus grumpy and cantankerous. In other words, it was a normal day for the Head of Slytherin House. Severus stomped into the Great Hall for breakfast with a scowl on his face that rivaled a constipated mountain troll. He was angry. His first session with Miss Know-It-All hadn't gone exactly as he had planned, although it had been surprisingly enjoyable.

'No need to pay a prostitute while Miss Granger is around. Wait, this won't work, she charges more!'

'The dim-witted chit thinks that she can best me. She's got another thing coming if she thinks that her sexual play is any form of manipulation. Doesn't she realize that she's playing right into my hands?'

'And what in the name of Merlin was she thinking to threaten me by going to Remus *to attend to examining her real patient*? What does she think she's playing at? I am the master of cunning and deceit, and she won't fool me into thinking that she will seek to bed Remus.' Severus attacked his breakfast as he mulled over Hermione's exiting speech, trying to determine her motive.

"Severus, what in the world have those poor eggs done to you to deserve such treatment?" Hooch asked with irritation, not wanting another morning to be soured by Mr. Sour himself.

Frustrated with Hermione, frustrated with his breakfast, and now frustrated that his preferred disposition was in question yet again, he retorted, "Madam, if you would please refrain from meddling in my affairs...."

"Severus, and what, pray tell, affairs could you possibly have?" she swiftly retorted.

"Oh, Hooch, please let Severus be. His affairs lie solely between him and his eggs," quipped Remus from Severus' left.

"Brilliant," Severus said facetiously, "I'm sandwiched between a werewolf and a lesbian, to what do I owe the pleasure of the attentions of this motley crew?"

"Why, Severus, I believe you do protest too much," Hooch said, enjoying the banter. "If I didn't know better, I'd think you wanted me to kiss you."

"Madam," Severus said seriously, "I quite like my soul to remain just where it is, if you don't mind."

"Bravo, bravo," jibed Remus, "round one goes to Severus! That was utterly enjoyable. Thank you both for the morning entertainment."

Owls descended on the morning diners and, in addition to packages and other mail items, several copies of the *Daily Prophet* were delivered to their subscribers. Severus was pleased with the diversion and attempted again to complete his breakfast.

"Well, well, Severus, have a look at this," Hooch teased. "Seems like your new admirer is also admiring others."

"If you don't stop your incessant pestering, I shall have to verbally duel you again, and I would very much like to finish my breakfast," Severus sneered.

"Oh, please, you act indifferent, but I'm sure you can't wait to return to your dungeons and take a peek at who Hermione's new conquest is."

"Hermione?"

"Yes, you see, I knew you'd be interested. Here, on page six..."

Severus cut her off, unable to stand her fishing for the Gossip du Jour. "I will not stand for your ceaseless nagging, woman!" Severus said as he scowled at the woman.

"My, my, my, how wonderful is this? Our Hermione wrote me a letter!" Remus said excitedly as he opened the letter. "Look here, she's asked to meet me for dinner... oh, my... oh, my."

Hooch reached beyond Severus toward Remus and snatched the letter out of his hands. "No more 'oh my', I want to read it!"

"Oh, my! Severus, oh, my! Hear this!" Hooch began choking as she tried to read and laugh simultaneously.

Dear Remus,

I was so happy to see you this past weekend! It really is wonderful to be back home. I have missed everyone so much, especially you. Would you please join me for dinner tonight at The Castle on the Green, in Hogsmeade, at 8:00 p.m.? Oh, please say 'yes'?

Be prepared for me to wine and dine you! I'll be waiting for you with anticipation.

Fondly,

Hermione

"This is too much! This past weekend she flirted with Severus, last night she was seen snogging Harry, and today this letter comes for you, Remus!" Hooch continued, though rather astounded. "How I admire her stamina; she seems to be going through her old friends rather quickly. Maybe then she'll get curious about the art of lesbian love sooner rather than later." Turning toward both Severus and Remus, she said, "Well, looks like I might be in for some of the action sooner than I thought!"

While Severus was anxious to find out about Hermione and Harry, he refused to be part of Hooch's continued games. Instead, he turned toward Remus and, in a mockingly disinterested tone that Severus hoped would elicit a response in lieu of him asking a question, Severus said, "Enjoy your dinner tonight, Remus. Seems like your number has been called."

To his surprise and horror, Remus replied, "I plan to, Severus. I recall vividly what she said to me this past weekend, regarding my 'animalistic quality' and being 'an animal in bed'. Oh, and of course, the kiss she gave me still has me... well, let's just say that I hope to enjoy my evening with Hermione."

With a "Good day," Severus was gone. The breeze caused by his swift departure left Remus' hair disheveled, but nothing could wipe the mischievous grin off of his face.

"I hope you know what you're getting yourself into, Remus," Minerva whispered. "The only person I've ever known to get one past Severus is dead. And need I remind you that he died at Severus' hand?"

"Oh, Minerva, how wonderfully dramatic!" Remus was so pleased with his performance that Minerva's dry wit added to his reverie.

"Minerva," Hooch said, "what in the world is going on here?"

"Nothing that you want to be meddling in, Hooch. While you amuse yourself at Severus' expense, Remus is playing with fire." Minerva continued, "I'm not my wonderfully meddling predecessor, as much as I loved him, and I refuse to participate in any games. So, please, what I don't know won't kill me, so keep it to yourselves." And with that, Minerva was gone.

"Remus, I love a good laugh, you know that. Please tell me what you're doing to Severus."

"No, sorry, Hooch, it's not my game to tell, but I sure will enjoy playing my part!" Remus smiled and got up to leave, taking Hooch by the arm and escorting her out of the Great Hall to begin their day.

~*~

Severus dashed to his chambers, ripped open the tie holding the paper together, and turned to page six, the Who's Who in Wizarding Society page. Never one for gossip or meddling, Severus had never read this page before. But as clear as day, there was a picture of Hermione and Harry holding hands, talking very intimately, and there... they kiss... deeply. And like a bad dream, this continued and continued until he could take it no longer, and he threw the paper into his fireplace, ignoring the screams that emanated from the charcoaled paper.

"I don't understand what kind of foolish Gryffindor game she's playing," Severus confessed aloud to no one.

"Why would she enjoy, well, whatever it was that we had last night, then leave and have sex with Potter, to only wake up and send an owl to Remus for a date tonight?"

Severus was confused not only with the events unfolding, but also with his newfound interest in Hermione's affairs. He tried to convince himself that he was not interested, merely curious as to her apparently robust sexual appetites. Befuddled as he was, he intended on completing his treatments with Hermione and getting IT working again consistently. Regardless of her personal life, she was contracted to provide him with, at minimum, ten sessions, paid in full. He would make her work for her money. No more of her own sexual releases! He was paying and he would ensure that she enjoyed none of it. The exceedingly arrogant chit. Had it not been for his pleasant surprise of IT's response last evening, Severus would have never allowed such crass behavior. And far be it from him to have moral standards in the face of an eager witch.

Considering the evidence at hand, Hermione had clearly been excited last night. Severus had noticed her nervousness as she'd asked to examine him. He had been amazed at her confession to enjoying, at minimum, three orgasms a day by her own hand. That seemed a bit excessive, and although shocked, her confession excited him and he briefly fantasized about licking her fingers next time he saw her.

As she pleased him, Severus had observed her increased arousal and noticed her rocking in place. It had taken him no time to figure out what she was doing. She'd been bringing herself to release without using her hands. Brilliant witch, indeed. From Severus' point of view, it was one of the most erotic scenes he had ever witnessed, let alone been involved in.

He'd wanted to take her and feel her depths, but once again, IT had not responded. After IT's initial release, Severus was not in a position to have an erection so quickly. He only hoped that by their next session, IT would respond again. That had been the best response he'd had in weeks.

Severus continued his investigations into the possible motive behind her foolish behaviors. She left his chambers, and despite having climaxed, she was not sated. She visited Potter. First she must've gone to her flat, as he'd heard her say her Floo address just before departing. So, she went home, maybe she contacted Harry and met with him for supper. And from the evidence, the picture clearly showed they have a romantic relationship. No kiss like that could be platonic. That picture spoke volumes. They would have had sex that evening. They were all over each other. Then what? She woke up early this morning, thought of her next conquest, and owled Remus.

Amazing.

She must be addicted to sex, it was the only answer. 'I can't wait to get IT working again so I can give IT to the chit again and again and again. She will have no need for another male to sate her. I will be enough for her. I will take her and give IT to her until she's purring like a fat cat.'

~~~~~

Her life had been good. She'd graduated from Hogwarts a war hero, Head Girl, with the highest NEWTs in recent history. She'd gone to America and continued her wonderful academic career and was rewarded with outstanding grades and an internship with one of the most prestigious institutions in North America. She returned to Hogwarts and was bested by the Slytherin snake, and it all went to hell in a hand basket. 'What does that phrase mean anyway?' Hermione wondered, and attempted to regain her dignity.

With a game plan in mind, Hermione returned to her Floo and called Harry, who had been clearly busy with something or someone. Hermione stuck her head into the flames and noticed someone in the background. Unwilling to allow her plans to go to waste simply because Harry had company, she asked if she could come over and told him that it was very important.

"Oh, Harry, you're the best. Please let me come through, and I will explain."

"I apologize for coming unannounced like this, but I really need to talk with you, Harry," Hermione said while looking at Frances, sending a clear message that she was to leave. Hermione may have been away from her friends for many years, but they were still her friends, and she was always in charge. Although not happy, Harry understood Hermione's cue and asked Frances to leave with a promise to pick up where they left off tomorrow. With a tight smile, Frances left the two friends alone and departed via Floo.

"What are you on about?"

"Um, no, I just met her tonight."

"How? Hermione! How in the world do I know?" Harry continued, "Well, now that I think about it, I guess the answer is no, considering she's married and all."

"Hermione, what is this all about?" Harry whispered, barely able to control his laughter.

"What?" Harry asked incredulously.

It took Harry a moment to process the information, then, in a light bulb moment, he said, "Brilliant, what do you need from me?"

"That's some tall order, Hermione. How do you plan on achieving that?"

"Now, Hermione, what problem do I have that you have a solution for?"

"Okay, Harry," she said with bated breath, "it's been a while since we've been together, and I've learned a lot about sex and a lot about myself."

"Tonight, you follow my directions, understand?"

Harry leaned away from Hermione this time, looked into her lust-filled eyes, and said, "As long as you don't fantasize that I'm Snape, you can have me do whatever it is you want in bed or out of bed," and returned his attentions to her neck.

~\*~

"Severus, how delightful to see you again!" Hermione exclaimed while holding onto Remus' arm as they walked toward Hogwarts from their dinner in Hogsmeade.

"Miss Granger, Remus," Severus replied while studying the pair.

"Isn't it a beautiful and clear November evening, Severus?" Remus asked.

"By the looks of your girlfriend, her body says that it's a bit nippy tonight," Severus purred while taking in Hermione's breasts.

"Yes, you're quite right, Severus," Remus replied. "Here, Hermione, please take my cloak."

Accepting his proffered coat, Hermione asked Severus, "So, Severus, what are you doing out here tonight?"

"Not that it's any of your concern, Miss Granger, but I have been collecting hellebore which, in case you've forgotten, can only be collected after sundown."

"By the way, that reminds me," Severus continued, "is it a full moon tonight? It's dangerous to be walking with a werewolf at night, isn't it, Hermione?"

At this Remus began laughing and said, "Ah, Severus, you're always so droll. You are the only other person that I can count on to know the cycle of the moon better than I, considering that you are the one who brews my Wolfsbane."

"And, Severus, it will be a full moon in a couple of days," Hermione said, "which is exactly why I asked to meet with Remus tonight, so close to his transformation. I want to be with him and experience his heightened senses." Hermione turned toward Remus and looked deep into his eyes. "I want to experience his glorious animal magnetism."

"Why, madam, I didn't know that you were into bestiality, too."

"Why thank you, Severus, that's something I've not considered! What an interesting encounter that would be, hey, Remus?"

Remus' blush colored his face and ears in the evening light. "Be sure to return to me, my love, in a couple of days. After the initial transformation, as long as I've taken my Wolfsbane, I'm quite tame and... randy."

"Oh, Remus, perhaps we should start tonight, you know, and get a head start on knowing each other."

"I don't have to stand here and listen to this dribble," Severus huffed, and prepared to flee the nauseating scene developing before him.

Hermione let go of Remus' arm and reached for Severus, and with her hand, delicately urged him to turn around and face her. "Severus, please don't leave. Remus has invited me back to Hogwarts for a nightcap, and I would love it for you to join us."

Without prompting from Hermione, Remus added, "Yes, Severus, we would love for you to join us."

Hermione rubbed Severus' arms seductively, and she noticed him looking from her to Remus and back again with an understanding forming on his features as more seconds ticked by.

"I shall consider it," he said, and with that, he turned around and left the pair staring after him, not knowing if their offer would be taken.

~\*~

"Remus, what if he shows up? What the hell are we going to do then, huh?" Not waiting for his reply, Hermione continued, "I don't even know why the hell I ventured away from our plans to get him jealous by inviting him over tonight. And if he shows up, he's going to expect a *ménage à trois*!"

"A what?"

"A threesome, Remus, a THREESOME!" Hermione shrieked, unable to control her anxiety.

"Well, as thrilled as I would be with a sexual encounter with you, Hermione..." Remus noticed her stare and quickly put the unspoken question to rest. "You are beautiful and desirable, but I have no plans on taking advantage of your situation, nor do I have any desire to be in the same bed with Severus."

"Thank you, Remus, but the question remains... WHAT DO WE DO?"

"First thing, Hermione, you must calm down. What if he arrives now, and you look like I've been beating you? Then Severus will have my hide. So go to the bathroom, freshen up, and return to me. I will have a stiff drink waiting for you."

Hermione gave Remus a strong hug and poured all of her frustration and anxiety into it, expecting Remus' calming and soothing nature to transfer onto her ragged nerves. Remus accepted her hug and held her against him in their strong embrace. Several deep breaths later, Hermione let go of Remus, gave him a kiss on the cheek, and went to the bathroom to freshen up.

Hermione took her time in the bathroom to really freshen up as she would before a sexual encounter. She had been a mess and wanted to feel as refreshed as she could be without the luxury of a shower or a bath. Several charms later, she was renewed and ready for what the evening held for her.

As she entered the lounge, she learned what her evening held for her. Four eyes were trained on her, Remus' looking apologetic, and Severus with a stare that spoke to his mischievous and naughty plans. As scared as she was, her cleansing charms went for naught as she immediately became wet with desire for Severus... or maybe it was for this threesome possibility that lay before her.

As she approached the pair, she took the Firewhisky offered by Remus and noticed him sniffing the air around her when he said, "Hermione, I take it that you're feeling better."

Remus had intended that joke to settle between Hermione and he alone, but comprehension dawned on the couple as Severus let out a deep and thunderous laugh, having clearly understood.

Hermione was embarrassed and wanted to pummel Remus for being so insensitive. He was supposed to be aiding her in her quest to best Severus, and she felt as if he had handed her on a silver platter to Severus. "What would Remus be doing with a silver platter?" thought Hermione, allowing her mind to take her to a safe place filled with gibberish where it seemed safer than being in her reality.

"Brilliant, Remus," Severus quipped, "now I understand why Hermione wanted to be with you during a time when your senses were heightened."

"I'm sorry, Hermione," Remus expressed his regret, "that was rather insensitive of me. Please sit here and drink up. I won't bite, I promise."

"But maybe I will," Severus responded, clearly working hard on baiting Hermione.

"Well, boys, I've never said no to a bite yet, so why don't we enjoy our nightcaps," Hermione said valiantly, not willing to show Severus her vulnerability.

Hermione, Remus and Severus spent the next two hours drinking a combination of Firewhisky, brandy, and a handful of wines. It seemed that they all were desperate to

seek an inebriated state to conceal their discomfort. Well, Hermione knew that was the reason she was consuming such quantities of alcohol and could only assume that Remus was doing the same. As for Severus, he seemed unaffected by the significant amount of alcohol he was putting away.

The evening was getting very interesting indeed. For the most part, Severus did not speak much, but he didn't have to. His body spoke for him. As the evening wore on, Hermione found Remus and Severus sitting on either side of her. The conversation was interesting, thought provoking, and toward the end of the evening, became more and more stimulating. They spoke about her time in America, her interest in Psychology, light gossip on the teachers and friends and the happenings while she was in America, and finally they also discussed war and those they had lost. All in all, it had turned out to be a wonderful evening full of fun and friendship. Their eventual physical closeness to Hermione was not lost on her, despite her inebriation. She was sandwiched between two men she was physically attracted to, though she had never truly revealed that to Remus.

Hermione had never engaged in a threesome before and had never even given it any serious thought. Did she want to do this now, with Remus and Severus? There was no doubt that she was feeling comfortable and at ease, and that sexual excitement was building in her with the possibility of what was on the horizon.

She remained concerned, albeit slightly, considering her drunken haze, that Severus nor Remus were not acting like men with impotence. Remus had outright laughed when she told him of Severus' accusation and her theory behind it. Taking his reaction and his word on face value, it had been clear to Hermione that he was not affected with this dysfunction, and it confirmed her theory that Severus was the patient.

But sitting here between both men, it certainly seemed like they were interested in pursuing a sexual relationship with her. Severus had been the first to make his intentions known. Hermione's face had flushed with excitement as she'd felt Severus' hand lightly touch her arm closest to him. He gently massaged it from elbow to hand and, at her response, was emboldened to widen his playing field and massaged her from shoulder to fingertips. Whether it was Severus' touch or that in combination with alcohol, she had never felt so stimulated in her whole life.

Awakening to the realization that she and Severus were not alone, Hermione turned to face Remus, not knowing what message she wanted to relay to him. When she turned toward Remus, she gave him a smile, and her eyes were filled with lust, with friendship and the promise of more.

Hermione was confused and loving it. She wanted to continue feeling wonderful, sensual, and desirable. These two men made her feel that way. It was part of her fantasy to be taken, wanted, and claimed by Severus, and although tonight Remus was part of the mix, the fantasy she created seemed to easily expand to him and his role in claiming her as well.

Remus seemed to understand her unspoken acceptance of this new situation and, encouraged, he reached out to touch her hair and laced his fingers in it, making sure to scrape his fingernails along her scalp as he combed her hair with his fingers. Hermione was turned on. She wished she had a camera capturing the moment for her to view later from all angles. She wanted to be her own fly on the wall, enjoying this moment from another's perspective.

Hermione couldn't remember how long they stood there, but she recalled Severus moving his touch to her side and lightly grazing her breast, while Remus claimed her mouth for a passionate kiss. Hermione could feel her heart beat in her clitoris and decided that she didn't want one of these men; she wanted both, now. Hermione began rubbing each man's upper leg, timidly working her way up. She reached their sexes and found them both aroused. She was about to turn around to face both men and begin her assertive assault when Remus grabbed her hand and asked, "Hermione, please, may I have a word with you before we continue?"

Hermione followed him to his bedroom, and when he closed the door to give them privacy, Hermione grabbed him and pressed her lips against his. She was passionate and wanted entry. Remus parted his lips and allowed her safe passage. She didn't know what he wanted, and at the moment neither one cared. Both were lost in their own senses, enjoying each other's taste.

Remus was the first to pull away. Panting, he asked, "Hermione, as much faith as you have in me, I am still a man, so if you don't leave now, we really will end up in a threesome, so please leave..."

"Remus, I want you... I want you too... I want both of you, please don't deny me," Hermione begged.

"We'll talk when we're both sober. For now, I shall send you away with Severus, and may your evening be filled with all that you desire."

"No," Hermione shrieked as Remus' remark brought her out of her drunken haze. "You're only denying me because Severus is right, you are really the ~~friend~~ friend, the one with dysfunction!"

"Hermione, feel this," Remus said with determination as he grabbed her hand and placed it onto his swollen penis. "Does that feel like a man with impotence?"

Hermione shook her head as if saying 'no'. He was hard, and she could feel his urge for release as he pressed his pelvis into her hand.

"I want you to be clear that you want to have sex with me because that is what ~~you~~ you want, not because your drunken body is desiring sex. Now please, go with Severus, and we'll talk in the morning."

When they emerged into the lounge where Severus sat nursing his drink and waiting for their return, Remus said, "Severus, Hermione and I discussed this and I do not wish to participate in a threesome. Please take Hermione home for me, she's had a bit too much to drink to go back home alone."

"Absolutely," Severus said as he removed himself from Remus' couch and led Hermione out of his chambers. Hermione wasn't sure how she got there, but she found herself in Severus' quarters, and he indicated that she could Floo to her flat from his Floo, as he had created that connection for her to ease her transport to and from the castle for their sessions.

"Hermione," Severus purred in her ear as he held her to him, "do you want me to take you home? Or can you stay with me...?"

Hermione turned her face up toward his and searched his deep black eyes for truth, acceptance, and desire. Before she could answer him, she assumed he read her own acceptance in her eyes, as he possessed her mouth with such fierceness that he brought her off the ground with his grip. Severus' hand traveled down her back and found the cleft of her buttocks, and, through her dress, he began to massage her crease.

She wanted to give all of herself to this man. He was claiming her just as she desired. If he wanted her in that way, she would give it to him and enjoy it herself. Hermione could feel his throbbing member against her stomach, and she wanted nothing more than to have him deep within her. She remembered seeing him the day before when she'd brought him to climax, and she was eager to have him inside her and filling her.

They broke away to breathe, and Severus guided her to his sofa and said, "Hermione, sit here, I shall return with a drink. Would you like liquor, wine, or tea?"

Calming down from such a passionate kiss was not easy. Hermione ran her fingers through her hair and was then able to respond, "Severus, yes, please, I would love some tea."

As Severus departed to prepare tea, Hermione began to think about what a crazy life she had begun since her return to England. She had begun her own business, was involved in a battle of wits with the most cunning of all Slytherins, had violated her Code of Ethics with her first patient in his very first session; she'd had sex with Harry, almost had sex with Remus, and was now about to win her battle with Severus. She was minutes away from having sex with the man, and she could care less if not all of her conditions had been met. She would have sex with him now and think about getting him to confess the rest later.

"Hermione? Hermione, wake up!"

Hermione woke up to the sound of a man calling her name again and again. She regained consciousness and found herself lying on someone's bed with Remus and Severus on either side.



"What happened? Severus?" Hermione asked while looking at the two men.

Severus replied, "You passed out."

To Be Continued....

A/N: A big THANK YOU goes to Jackie, my first beta, and to the Mighty Wartcap for the re-beta.

When I first began discussing the various sub-plots with my best friend, SiriusWoman, she had one condition that I had to meet. She wanted a character fashioned after her to be found in bed with Harry. I couldn't quite pull that one off, but the "Frances" character is the best I could do with the situation at hand. So, SiriusWoman, sorry, but there will be no screwing the Boy-Who-Lived!

This was the first chapter to have both Severus and Hermione's POV's presented. I hope it didn't confuse anyone.

PLEASE don't get riled up regarding Hermione's sexual freedom! She's in her late twenties, she's single, she's confident, and yes, she's weak. Let her have her fun, will ya!

Isn't Remus just the best? Doesn't he make you just want to have sex with him? AAAHHH!

*The Castle on the Green* Does that sound familiar to anyone? I'm from NYC, so I fashioned it after our famous "Tavern on the Green."

Page Six, the *Who's Who in Wizarding Societypage* Sound familiar to anyone? This is also a NYC reference from The Post; they have a Page Six Entertainment section. It's pure gossip about Hollywood stars. I'm like Severus; I don't read such gibberish.

## Beast or Nobleman

*Chapter 8 of 15*

Severus experiences Erectile Dysfunction. Hermione is a Sex Therapist. Will she be able to cure him?

WARNING: This story is labeled Humor, Drama and Angst. The drama and angst are introduced in this chapter. There has also been a rape/abuse warning associated with this story and this chapter is the reason why. As a result, this chapter may be disturbing to those readers who are sensitive to rape stories; disturbing to those who want this story to remain fluffy; and disturbing to those who want Severus to be a sweet guy. No flames please as I have warned you.

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Having been a Death Eater and a double agent, Severus felt that there was nothing in this world that could shock him. Well, there was that one time that a very tipsy Dumbledore had recounted a racy and lewd fantasy concerning himself, McGonagall, Fawkes and a transfigured bowling ball. That tale would've been enough to gross out even the late Dark Lord. Not to mention that Severus hadn't even been able to look at the headmaster for days. Yes, headmaster indeed. That racy account had given new meaning to his title.

And yet, he was astonished when Hermione and Remus invited him back to Remus' chambers for a nightcap. He hadn't needed to use Legilimency to know that there was more behind that invitation than just social drinking. No, they had been inviting him for a different kind of socializing, and he hadn't known that Remus was into that sort of thing, or that he was even willing to share his first evening with Hermione.

As for Hermione, it seemed like nothing she did anymore was going to surprise him. She was an enigma, a free spirit, and reminded him nothing of the Insufferable-Know-It-All he knew ten years ago. Well, she was still insufferable, and still a-know-it-all; add in a touch of 'pain in his arse', and you had a grown up, sexy version of the once-teenaged bane of his existence.

Severus couldn't immediately accept their invitation it would show he was too eager, too interested. But upon returning to his chambers, he was concerned about a number of things. If he accepted, and IT did not work, he would place himself in a position to expose his dysfunction to not only Hermione, but also to Remus. If IT did work, he had no desire to entertain Remus, but every desire to take Hermione. He would have to share, and that had never been a part of his vocabulary. But if he chose not to participate, he would never know if Hermione and Remus had sex, and if they did, his cover would be blown. No, it was clear that he would have to attend.

Before leaving his chambers, Severus decided that a little preparation was in order. He bathed. Really bathed and washed his hair. During the past week, he'd washed his hair every day he would see Hermione. He'd washed it on Friday, the day of the Halloween ball; on Saturday before his meeting with Hermione; on Monday prior to their first session; and now, just before heading out to Remus' chambers. What was she doing to him? His usual monthly wash was always enough for him, and now, just because of this little chit, he'd taken to being something that he was not.

Severus felt that he was a man who really knew himself. He knew his Slytherin tactics like the back of his hand, he knew the rules of engagement, and he stayed true to himself regardless of what people expected or wanted him to be. He was cantankerous and he was okay with that. So why now, within the span of a week, had he been behaving different than himself?

It had to be that his mind had become befuddled due to IT's lack of performance and lack of consistency. He was weakened, and as a result he was compromised. Had this been a real engagement, his plan of attack would've been thwarted, and he would've had to call in for reinforcements. On the battlefield, that would work, but in his life, he was his one-man army, efficient and clever as ever, but still, only one man.

Severus had experienced many interesting evenings in his life, considering his involvement in dark revels, not to mention experiencing the chaos that was the Weasleys during evening meetings at Order Headquarters. But tonight was curious. Conversation had gone fairly smoothly, and he was pleased that he didn't need to overly participate. He planted a few questions here and there and allowed Hermione and Remus to move the conversation along. While they discussed, Severus examined the situation before him. The atmosphere had relaxed significantly since the awkward beginning when Remus had embarrassed Hermione. While Severus enjoyed Remus' observation of Hermione's sexual excitement, he was concerned that she would run off, as she was obviously embarrassed and uncomfortable with the situation. Well, then why did the chit invite him over? After Hermione's comment on *not turning down a bite*, Severus decided that he would be the one to take her, fuck Remus. He would do what he had to do and take all opportunities presented to him; either take them, or create them. He would determine which as the evening progressed.

As the evening went on, Severus decided that he was cured! He didn't know how she did it, but IT was responding! He and Remus had moved to sit on opposite sides of Hermione while they talked and drank their several nightcaps. Feeling her sitting next to him was quite stimulating, and as he began taking liberties with his caresses, she was responding and leaning into his touch. Whether it was Hermione herself, or that in combination with knowing that he would take her in front of Remus, IT was responding, and Severus' plan of attack had begun to formulate. Severus decided that he would take Hermione, take her in front of Remus while ensuring that the werewolf did not participate. Severus does not share. He would put a full Body-Bind on Remus and prop him up in a corner of the room to watch as Severus took Hermione. Yes,

that was a splendid plan.

Alas, Remus proved once again that he was a sheep in werewolf's clothing. Just when things were getting interesting, the wolf tucked his tail between his legs and chickened out. Severus would never have displayed such weakness. While he also had no desire to participate in a threesome, he would never have backed down. No, he would have overpowered the wolf and taken his mate. Remus was such a coward.

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"Hermione," Severus said, "here is your tea. I hope you like it; it's chamomile, the properties of which I'm sure you know very well. What do you think of it?"

"Um, it's just delightful, thank you." Hermione took another sip and detected other flavors in addition to chamomile. "Severus, what is the base ingredient? I taste something quite smooth and fragrant."

"This is my personal blend, chamomile and lavender, that I enjoy drinking in the evenings when I'm in need of some relaxation after a busy day of dealing with dunderheads."

"Why, Severus, are you comparing Remus and I to dunderheads?"

"No, Hermione, I'm thinking solely of you and comparing Remus and I to dunderheads."

"Why?"

"Well, because Remus and I almost took advantage of you. Do you understand? Both of us," Severus allowed a moment to pass for this realization to sink in with Hermione and continued, "and if Remus had not had the foresight to end it, we would have both taken you."

"Yes, that was where it was heading, wasn't it?"

Severus couldn't keep his eyes off of Hermione. His gaze went from her eyes to her lips and further south to her cleavage. At her confession to the direction in which the evening had been progressing, he scooted closer to her, gently plucked her teacup from her hands, and placed it on the coffee table in front of them.

"Yes," Severus whispered in her ear, agreeing with her estimation. He leaned closer and restrained himself from jutting out his tongue and tasting the curves of her ear. "And I was an only child, Miss Granger, I do not share well."

Placing his hands on either side of her head, he kissed her fiercely, almost bruising her lips. He pulled back and looked into her hooded eyes, filled with both the effects of booze and lust. It was time to quit the bullshit and get back on target.

"Hermione, do you realize why you are here with me?"

"Yes, Remus decided he didn't want to have a threesome."

"But why not ask me to leave? You were, after all, his date tonight, not mine."

"Yes, well, I'm not sure. I guess..."

"Hermione," Severus cut her off, "don't you see? It's because he *couldn't* have sex with you. He wanted to, but he *couldn't*!" Severus leaned back into his chair, looked Hermione straight in the eyes and with his distinct brand of smugness, he added, "He took your test, Hermione, and failed; he is a weak and broken man."

Severus sat back to watch her reaction to his statement. He needed to reinforce his lie to her and, luckily for Severus, Remus had made it quite easy.

"How dare you speak of him like that?" Hermione screamed. "Severus, I am on to you! Remus is a nice man! A nice man! And you are nothing but foul and evil. Remus desired me and I felt his erection. When he took me to his bedroom, it took all of our restraint not to bed each other. I felt him, he was ready for me!"

Hermione continued to be full of surprises. Severus had not anticipated her strong reaction to his benign statements.

"You are the *real* patient, Severus! I know you are! It is not Remus; he is a Gryffindor! He is brave, honest and true, and he would admit if he were impotent! There is nothing wrong with that, Severus, nothing! But when you develop it, you act like an evil monster has invaded your body, and you go into self-preservation mode trying to cover it all up! IT IS NORMAL, SNAPE! NORMAL!"

"Madam, I assure you that ... "

"Don't give me any of your shite again, Snape! I don't want to hear any more of your lies!"

Severus noticed Hermione beginning to hyperventilate. She crossed the room to continue her onslaught after he had retreated from the couch to get away from the screaming beast.

"You are foul; you are evil! You are an evil little cockroach not worthy of my attention, Snape! I wouldn't cure you if you were the last wizard on earth, and I was the last witch! I wouldn't care for you to have the ability to propagate this earth with more slimy Slytherin creatures, let alone return to you the ability to enjoy sex! I hope your dick rots in Hades, Snape! I hope it rots from lack of use and lack of pussy!"

Severus was no longer amused. No, he would teach this bitch not to be insolent and obnoxious. Who the fuck did she think she was to scream at him? He was Severus Snape, the head of Slytherin House, Potions master extraordinaire, a double agent who had risked his life for the last twenty years! He'd defeated the Dark Lord! He had! Not the Potter brat and not anyone else! He deserved respect! He deserved reverence!

Without saying a word, Severus slapped her across her face, and in the moment between shock and action, Severus picked her up and brought her to his bed. He threw her onto the middle of the bed and was upon her before she could fathom what was going to happen. Lifting up her skirt and pinning her down with his body, he reached underneath for her panties and ripped them off. Severus was not himself anymore. He had not felt this rush of lust and violence since his early days with the Dark Lord. He had not raped anyone in a long while, but he was on a roll. His anger was extreme and he was running on instinct.

Severus reached for his wand and used a Binding Charm and bound her hands and feet to the bed, keeping her open for him. She began screaming, and he placed a Silencing Charm on the room as well so that her screams could not escape the room. Though, the noise she was making was beginning to bother him.

He knelt in between her stretched out legs, ready to forcibly take her. With his flaccid penis in his hand he placed it at her entrance and stopped. He looked up at her face; her screaming obscenities at him didn't bother him as much as seeing the pain and the pleading in her eyes. Severus immediately backed off, tucked his limp member away, leaned back on his heels, brought his two hands to his face, and cried. He cried for what seemed like an eternity, but in reality, Severus knew it was only a few moments. He instantly cast the spell to release Hermione from her binds, and as she retreated to the headboard, she quickly covered her exposed flesh with her dress.

"How dare you?" She was whispering after having lost her voice to the exertion she put it through while screaming at him for the past five minutes.

Five minutes, that's all it really had been since he was with her in the living room. Five minutes between being a normal man and being an animal. That's what he had been when he was young and stupid. He'd enjoyed raping and torturing along with the rest of the Death Eaters. That had been so long ago.... It was another time, another place, as if the experiences he recalled belonged to another person. But tonight, he'd learned that the animal lay within, dormant no longer. God was indeed cruel. He had thought

his past was just that. The Dark Lord was dead! But the beast remained within him. He had believed Dumbledore when he'd told him that he was honest, true and trustworthy. He'd even begun to believe the lie himself. But tonight the fates had chosen to teach Severus Snape a lesson he had long forgotten.

He was, and would ever remain, an animal.

And with that realization, Severus knew that he could not move on with his life with this animal exposed. While he would not forget, *should* not forget, he needed Hermione to forget.

Severus moved toward Hermione and tried to gently grab her face despite her fighting him. He was able to keep her head level, and he quickly delved into her mind through Legilimency. Finding the horrific memories easily, he cast an Obliviate charm and removed them.

He then cast a Stupefying charm to ensure that he had time to create his story. He levitated her and returned the bed to its previously tidy shape. He moved Hermione back to the lounge and placed her on the couch. After reversing the Stupefy spell with 'Ennervate', he sat down, waiting for her to come to.

That was it. It was done.

Severus did not want to be in the room alone with Hermione when she came to. He was nervous, though he would've been hard pressed to admit it, had he realized it for what it was. He hadn't done anything to anyone in a very long time. Now, he had gone and let the beast loose on someone that he cared about.

Yes, he apparently cared about the chit. Had he not, he surely would've taken her, regardless of how he'd felt. He reached out to her, smoothed down her face, and then, just as he was going to walk toward the Floo to get Remus, he remembered that he had ripped off Hermione's panties. Severus ran toward his bedroom chambers, found the garment, repaired it, and then, running back toward the lounge, he saw Hermione stirring. She was not fully conscious yet, but he couldn't chance it. He placed another Stupefy charm on her and lifted her dress and with much difficulty, replaced the item on her body.

He was miserable. Here he was with a woman that he had been playing cat and mouse with, and he'd never expected things to get this far. All he'd wanted to do was get IT working and to possibly be able to get the girl too. Wasn't that what every man wanted? He looked at Hermione and reached out to bring her dress down over her panties. In his despair, he let his head fall onto her pubic bone, and he cried. He could smell the evidence of her arousal earlier that evening, and he felt anguish at what he had done to her. He wanted her the right way, and although he had erased her memory, he had to live with himself now. He'd thought he had gotten rid of this monster.

He had a decision to make. Would he embrace the monster or rebuke it? Could he even turn his back to this beast? He looked down toward Hermione, and she looked so peaceful, so beautiful. He then noticed that the side of her face was bruised from when he'd slapped her and, removing his wand, he began the magic to heal her face. He cast 'Ennervate' on Hermione again and looked around his chambers for any lasting evidence of what had transpired. He knew exactly what memories he'd erased from her. With his extensive double agent experience, Severus went about the chambers fixing things like they'd been before this ugly mess. He filled her tea cup full as if she hadn't drank any, and thankfully the tea in the pot was now cool to signify the passing of time that he would not try to cover up. He returned from his bedroom chambers, and with one final look, went to the Floo and contacted Remus.

"Remus, Remus!"

Remus came out of his bedroom, dressed only in boxer shorts, and said, "Severus? What's going on? Is Hermione all right?"

"Remus, Hermione has passed out and I would like you to be here when she awakens. Please pass through."

Remus arrived within seconds at Severus' chambers, having only spent enough time in his rooms to find his robe and place it over his body.

"Severus? Why, she looks so peaceful, like she's just sleeping."

"I haven't tried to wake her, but I did perform a medical diagnostic charm on her, and she's only passed out. I have not attempted to wake her. But I think that she may not appreciate waking up in my chambers, so I've asked you here to help me see her awake."

"Sure, but, Severus, what happened?" Remus asked, quite confused.

"We arrived at my chambers so that she could Floo to her flat from here." Severus noticed the look Remus gave him, and he raised his hand for Remus to allow him to continue. "About a week ago, I opened up my Floo to allow Hermione access to and from her flat. Well, once we got here, I asked her if she wanted tea, and she agreed. I prepared the tea and returned to find her like that," Severus said while pointing to Hermione's sleeping form.

"Severus, if you've opened up your Floo to allow Hermione access, then surely your relationship with her is such that if she woke up in your chambers, she would not be alarmed."

"Remus, I refuse to discuss my personal life with you! Suffice it to say that had that been the case, I would never have asked you here! Now if you would prefer not to be here, I can easily contact the headmistress..."

"No, Severus, I care for her, and I'm not bothered in the slightest, and I am actually grateful that you've contacted me."

"Yes, I'm sure. You and Hermione were quite close tonight. I would imagine that had it not been for my presence, you and she would've enjoyed one another tonight."

"Severus, I asked her to leave with you because what was about to happen was not to my taste. Had I only been interested in Hermione in that way, I would've sent you away, and not her."

"Just what are your intentions, Remus?"

"My intentions? Oh, my, what are you? Her father? My intentions are none of your business! And what are yours, Severus? You've opened up your Floo to her for a week now, you say? And why?"

Hermione began to stir. Both men forgot their arguments and turned their attention toward their sleeping beauty.

"Hermione? Hermione, wake up."

Hermione woke up to the sound of a man calling her name again and again. She regained consciousness and found herself lying on someone's bed with Remus and Severus on either side.

"What happened? Severus?" Hermione asked while looking at the two men.

Severus replied, "You passed out."

"I... I passed out? Whose bed am I on?"

"Hermione, you are on my couch in the lounge," Severus said. "I went to fetch us some tea, and upon my return, you were asleep. I merely allowed you to sleep for a little while, but then decided that you would be happier in your own flat, and I summoned Remus to help me wake you."

"Why would you need help waking me, Severus?"

"Hermione, I did not think that you would feel comfortable waking up in my chambers in the morning. I thought you would feel safer if Remus were here as well."

"But you deserve so much more than a shag. You are beautiful, Hermione, inside and out, and believe me, many men would fight tooth and nail to get their talons on you, but would they know the beauty within? The way your eyes shine when you read a book; the way you smile when someone you love is near; the way you laugh, snorting and all, when someone you love makes you laugh.... You are beautiful, Hermione, and I love you, all of you." Remus realized all that he had said, and while not lying, he was concerned that he'd let out too much too soon. Trying to reel himself back in, he continued, "Enough to allow you to lead your own life and make your own decisions."

"Just great, just fucking great! The two men that I care about are both throwing me to the other, and for what? For the good cause? Because little ole' Hermione Granger can't get a man? Let me tell you, Remus Lupin, that I can have any man that I want! Do you know that? I go after Severus, and he nobly hands me to you. You have feelings for me, and you nobly shove me off! I am no one's property, Remus! For Merlin's sake, I'm a doctor, Remus! I'm not a child anymore!"

"Hermione, please, listen to me. I care for you deeply, but if you want Severus, then you have to go after him. Don't change your mind because I happen to have feelings for you."

"So you have *feelings* for me? A moment ago you said you *loved* me! Those are very different, Remus! So, which is it?"

"Hermione, it is late, and you have had a difficult night. Please, calm down. I'm here with you because I care. I don't want to see you hurt. By the same token, I want you to be happy. I have always wanted you to be happy. The way I've kept you happy is by staying away. Hermione, look at me, please. I'm a werewolf. Why would I want to inflict my life upon you? Severus does care for you in his own way. I've known him for a long time. He is who he is. And what he said tonight is the closest thing to love that I've ever heard or seen from him. That was a selfless act on his part. He cares for you."

"Yes, enough to let me go. Just like you. What if I don't want to be let go of?" Hermione asked, finally looking up into Remus' eyes, looking for a fight and finding none.

Remus gave her a gentle kiss on the lips and got up to leave. Straightening his robes, he said, "Hermione, I *love* you. Please go to Severus and do what you intended to do with him. He needs you too." And with that, he Apparated and was gone.

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To say that Hermione was confused was the biggest understatement in the world. It was like saying that Voldemort had been a bad boy.

Thankfully, her first session the next morning was scheduled for 11:00 a.m., and she made good use of the extra hours in the morning. When Remus departed, it had been about 3:00 a.m., and she'd had little sleep the entire night. She tossed and turned, thinking of both Severus and Remus. Part of her wanted to cry and the other part wanted to scream. Why the hell was she attracted to noble men? And when the fuck did Severus get hit by a nobility curse? She'd *Avada Kedavra* the bastards that had done that to him! She loved the self-serving bastard. She wanted him to take her, all of her, hard and fast. Since seventh year it had been her fantasy. She'd never asked him to develop feelings for her. She'd never asked him for friendship or love. She'd thought she had been fairly clear with him during her obvious flirtation with him at the staff Halloween party last Friday, and then the little bit the next morning. It was just enough to make him think. Then, of course, there was Monday! Nothing in what she'd done had made him think of anything other than sex. She was sure of that.

Either he'd turned noble, or he honestly didn't want her in any way.

No, she had clearly heard what Severus had shared with Remus. He was being noble.

Stupid git.

To Be Continued...

A/N:

I struggled over the path this chapter led our characters, wondering if I should trash it and start again or to just let it be. Believe me, while I know the ending, the path we take to get there is up to my muse and *Beast or Nobleman* is what I came up with. I know some of you may not be happy with Severus' actions but I need to be true to me, and to what comes out of this brain as I write.

I have added an entry into my blog [www.gryffindorknowitall.blogspot.com](http://www.gryffindorknowitall.blogspot.com) (June 2006 Archive) detailing my reasons for doing this and delved a little deeper into my understanding of Severus Snape and why I believe what has transpired in this chapter is as much in character as *my* Snape can be.

Please know that I DO NOT condone rape of any sort. Enough said.

My friend said that after she read this chapter (she gets first dibs) she "hated" Snape. That actually upset me. I don't want people leaving this chapter hating him. If that is what happened, I apologize for not being a good enough writer to get you to where I felt we needed to be for him.

Mucho THANKS to Jackie for the amazing beta work. You really are wonderful!

Mucho THANKS to Warty for the once over. You ROCK!

Mucho THANKS to SiriusWoman for helping me to process what I had written, giving me great ideas, and helped with organizing my thoughts for future chapters.

So, this chapter was angst and not the snorting laughter that I like to inflict on my readers. Hopefully, I can make up for that with a funny and rather decent story in the end.

THANKS to YOU for reading and reviewing. Especially a humungous THANK YOU to all of you who are supporting me during the wonderful life this story is living! YOU ALL ROCK!

~Ruthie

## The Web of Deceit

### Chapter 9 of 15

Severus experiences Erectile Dysfunction. Hermione is a Sex Therapist. Will she be able to cure him?

Hermione's day began with her eleven a.m. appointment with Sebastian, a seventy-three-year-old wizard who had been experiencing impotence for the last year or so. This was his first session with Hermione, and while she was feeling quite competent and relaxed, she was also a bit disgusted imagining this frail man in the throes of passion. He was definitely not a looker, but upon meeting his witch at the end of the session, whom Hermione surmised to be approximately forty years his junior, she realized that assisting Sebastian was going to be easy. He surely must be feeling pressure to perform with such a young lover. She was confident that within four to six sessions, Sebastian would feel comfortable enough with himself and his lover to properly make love to her again and be on the road to having a happy and fulfilling love

life.

*Making love, that is what Remus was talking about last night. He loves me and wants me... well, sort of. Severus doesn't love me and wants me... sort of. Such noble men; what is the world coming to?*

*And what the heck does a girl have to do for a shag around here?*

Hermione heard a knock on her office door, and after she flicked the door open with her wand, Wilma, Hermione's assistant, gingerly entered her office and said, "Excuse me, Dr. Granger?"

"Yes, Wilma?"

"Your twelve-thirty has cancelled and asked to be rescheduled for tomorrow, which I did. You'll be happy to know that your schedule is getting quite full!" she said, smiling. "While that leaves you free for the remainder of the day, you also have a visitor waiting for you."

"Oh, who is it?"

"Dr. Granger," she said with a wide grin on her face, "it's Mr. Harry Potter, doctor!"

"Oh, Wilma, please calm yourself. He's just a man after all; it's not like he's a god or something." Hermione smiled at the woman she'd recently hired. She didn't really know her well yet, but what she did know, she liked. She was intelligent, efficient, and personable. Now, if only she were a man, then Hermione would be in a better mood....

"Please let him in, Wilma, and stop drooling--it's so unbecoming!"

The women smiled at each other just as Wilma left to retrieve Hermione's guest.

"Oh, hi, Harry, you're just in time."

"This was supposed to be a surprise. What am I just in time for?"

"I was just thinking, what does a woman have to do to get a shag around here?" Hermione beamed at her longtime friend from behind her desk.

"Well, before I fill your order, my dear, I think eating a delicious meal prepared by yours truly is called for. Then," Harry said while looking around her comfortable office, "with my more than decent Transfiguration N.E.W.T. score, I can easily transfigure that comfy couch into a more comfy bed. What do you think?"

"I think," Hermione said as she removed herself from behind her desk and sauntered to where Harry stood, "that I would love nothing more than to sate all of my appetites in one afternoon."

"All of your appetites?" Harry teased. "What of your appetite for power and fame?"

"I've never wanted fame, Harry. But as for power... when I literally have the Boy Who Lived in the palms of my hands, well, that's enough power to sate even this witch."

Hermione reached out for him, held him tight against her, and kissed him deeply, then stood away, looked into his green eyes, and said, "Harry, you cooked?"

~\*~

"Have you engaged in sexual acrobatics lately?" Harry asked while running his hands up and down Hermione's naked body as they lay facing each other in Harry's transfigured bed.

"Harry, my brain's usually a bit muddled post coitus, so if you don't mind, explain what you mean."

"It looks as if you've been held with a Binding Charm. Look, you have the marks on your wrists and ankles. Having enjoyed doing that to a number of witches in my day, I know the signs when I see them." Harry smiled as he questioned his close friend.

"Harry, the last time I had sex was with you," Hermione answered her friend while examining the marks he had referred to. "I don't know how I got these marks." She looked again at Harry. "I don't know how... I don't remember...."

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Thankful that she had no other appointments for the day, she decided that she had to speak with Remus. She didn't know how she had received those marks, but he seemed like the best person to review this with. Harry was right; they sure looked like marks created by a Binding Charm. While not completely adverse to such creative sex games, she would have liked to remember playing.

Hermione considered sending Remus an owl requesting to see him tonight after his classes. She knew that was the best and most courteous action, but she couldn't wait. She felt nervous and anxious, mostly about the unknown. She could not remember any events from the previous several evenings to warrant such marks. Her only recent sexual encounters were with Harry, and he usually was very tender with her.

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"Hi, Remus," Hermione said as she entered his DADA classroom after waiting for all of his students to file out.

"Hermione, what a pleasant surprise!" Remus walked swiftly toward Hermione and embraced her.

"I'm sorry, Remus, for coming over unannounced, but I just needed to speak with you."

"You don't need an appointment to see me, Hermione. I love it that you're here. Please, let's move to my office."

"Don't you have another class yet?"

"No, that was the last one of the day for me. Just one more period left in the day, and thankfully I have that period free on Wednesdays."

As they made small talk, Hermione followed Remus into his office just above his DADA classroom, and they sat together on the chairs in front of his desk. Remus removed himself from the chair and approached the Floo, spoke to a house-elf, and was immediately provided with tea and biscuits for two. Returning to his seat near Hermione and offering her tea, he asked, "So, Hermione, to what do I owe the pleasure of your company this afternoon?"

"Remus, I came because I needed to talk with someone, and I couldn't think of anyone else I would like to help me with my investigation."

"Investigation?" Remus asked. "What are you investigating?"

Hermione held out her arms to Remus, pulling up her sleeves and exposing her wrists. "I have bruises on my wrists and my ankles. They look rather fresh, but I don't recall being in a situation that would've left these marks."

Remus gently held her by the wrists and turned them over as he tenderly examined her. He then reached down and pulled her feet onto his lap to examine her ankles. Pulling off her heels, he held onto her feet and examined the skin, noticing the slight swelling and bruising--same as on her wrists.

Breathing deeply, he responded, "Hermione, you say that you do not recall a situation in which you would have received these bruises?"

"Correct," Hermione replied, and seeing the distant look on his face, she asked, "Remus, please, what are you thinking?"

"Hermione, these bruises are light. It seems that they were recently made, maybe this morning or last night. Any earlier and there would be signs of healing, not to mention that you didn't notice them earlier, and neither had I." Remus allowed Hermione to remove her feet from his lap, and he continued, "I must be honest with you, Hermione, these look like bruises caused by a Binding Charm. Considering the placement of these injuries, I can only assume that your hands and feet were bound, individually and apart, as if you were tied to a bed. Do you understand what I'm trying to say, Hermione?"

"Yes, sex games."

"Well, yes." Remus stood up and looked down at Hermione, confusion and resolve written on his face. "Hermione, last night I left you at your flat in London. I did not touch you. You do remember that, don't you?"

"Oh, Remus!" Hermione bolted from her chair into Remus' arms. "I know that it wasn't you! You would never hurt me! Please, I didn't come here to accuse you of anything. I came to you for help."

"How about when we were in my bed chambers? I am rather strong, especially so close to the full moon. While I don't recall doing anything that would cause those injuries, I was rather intoxicated..."

"Remus, please," Hermione said and reached up to his face and kissed his lips tenderly. "You could never hurt me, Remus."

"Well, no, Hermione, I would never *intentionally* hurt you. But assuming that it was not me, as neither you nor I recall anything that would've caused those bruises, let's continue. How do you think you received these injuries?"

"Well, Harry was the one who noticed them this afternoon. As you see, they are rather light, but now that I know they are there, I see them clearly. This morning, I was very sleepy and dressed quickly for my first appointment at the office, so I really didn't notice anything out of the ordinary." Hermione stopped rambling for a moment and searched Remus' stormy gray eyes. "Remus, I have not engaged in that sort of sexual play, and as a matter of fact, I have never done that. Not that I'm adverse to trying, mind you, but the opportunity just never seemed to present itself."

"Hermione, how do you think you received these injuries?" Remus reiterated his question.

"Oh, yes, well, you see, I don't know. That's why I'm here."

"Fair enough. Then let's review what you've done recently."

"Starting from when?"

"I think we should begin with yesterday morning. As I indicated, it does not look as if these bruises are older than that, or we would have noticed healing."

Hermione and Remus reviewed the events of the last thirty hours, beginning with Hermione waking up Tuesday morning, sending Remus the invitation to dinner as they had planned, her full day at the office, dinner with Remus, her evening with Remus and Severus, her morning, and finally a cursory discussion of Harry noticing her bruises. Other than her evening with Remus and Severus, her life was laid bare before her and was revealed as nothing special and rather boring.

"Well, it seems that we should examine your evening with Severus and me."

"It was pretty straight forward; well, at least in terms of anything of a physical nature. You both were very gentle the entire evening during the little physical contact that we had."

"When you and Severus left my chambers... how about then?"

"Well, we had some light snogging." Hermione looked into Remus' eyes, unsure as to what she would find with her confession. "Sorry, Remus."

"Hermione, I sent you away with him. I knew that it could and probably would happen."

"He left me on the couch to make tea, and when he returned, I was asleep.... I was rather drunk," Hermione said in excuse of her behavior.

"How long were you out?"

"I have no idea. How long was it until Severus contacted you?"

"I never really gave it much thought, but I would imagine about fifteen minutes or so from the time you both left my chambers. I had enough time to clear up the mess we left in the lounge, contact a house-elf to remove the trays, prepare for bed, and begin reading a book before I heard Severus call me."

"Your chambers are not too far from his. Only about a three minute walk, if that far. Once we arrived at his chambers, it could not have been more than a few minutes before he left me in his lounge to prepare the tea."

"So we are talking about you not having any recollection of about ten minutes."

"Yes, that sounds about right."

"So our mystery might be solved if we found out what happened in those ten minutes."

Hermione stood up and began pacing the office. She walked from the window to the hearth on the opposite side of the office in deep thought.

"Hermione, do you think Severus took advantage of you?"

"I did wonder that, but why don't I remember?"

"A Memory Charm, perhaps?"

"Oh, please, Remus, why in the world would he do that? If we had sex, why wouldn't he want me to remember?"

"Unless it was a failed attempt of his that he does not want you to recall. Remember, Hermione, the lengths to which he is going to protect himself from you knowing his condition."

"Yes, I know, but it is too difficult to believe, even for him. And we did not have sex, Remus. A girl would know, even with a Memory Charm."

"Even after a well-placed Cleansing Charm?"

"Remus, you're scaring me. What are you saying?"

"Hermione, I am saying that perhaps your falling asleep was not from exhaustion, but from a charm to erase your memories; memories that Severus did not want you to have. I agree with you, though; had he taken advantage of you, I would hope that you would know your body well enough to know it had been abused. But as it stands, other than your sleeping alone last night in your flat, those ten minutes seem to be the only time you cannot recall."

"All of this talk about Memory Charms is just too far fetched for me to believe. I can't believe that Severus would do something like that to me. I mean, I know that he isn't an affectionate man, but to erase my memory? What motive would drive him to do that? I don't even know why we're even discussing this; there is no proof...."

"Hermione," Remus cut her off, "what if we found the proof that a Memory Charm had been placed on you?"

"Proof? How?"

"Mind you, if evidence of this were found, it would not find Severus guilty, nor can the memories be recovered without doing much damage, which I'm not willing to do."

"How?"

"Legilimency."

"Besides Severus, I don't know anyone who knows Legilimency."

"I know someone," Remus responded.

"Who?"

"Me."

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"Hermione, it's dinnertime," Remus said as they departed from his office. "Would you like to join me in the Great Hall, or should we retire to my chambers and have dinner there?"

"Honestly, I don't know if I can eat, but even if I could, I do not feel ready to face Severus without knowing if I am missing memories."

Remus held her close by his side as he led her from his office to his chambers. "Come, let's go to my chambers, I will order dinner, and we will find out if you have had any Memory Charms cast on you."

Hermione and Remus walked to his chambers and were only noticed by a few of the students who were on their way to the Great Hall for dinner. Once there, Remus ordered dinner, and as predicted, Hermione could not eat. Deciding that answering their unanswered question was more important for Hermione's peace of mind, Remus asked Hermione into his bedroom and told her to make herself comfortable. Hermione lay out on the mattress and, following Remus' instructions, attempted to relax while keeping her eyes closed.

"Hermione," Remus spoke in a soothing and measured voice as he sat down next to her on the bed, "exploration of the mind via Legilimency for the purpose of finding evidence of a Memory Charm is not easy and is not information that can be forcibly obtained. A Memory Charm, contrary to popular belief, does not remove memories; it covers them, leaving a delicate web in its place. It is evidence of this web that I will be searching for. Only through Dark Magic can those memories be retrieved, but it leaves in its place a befuddled mind that no brand of magic, Light or Dark, can repair."

Remus stared at Hermione with a conviction and a determination that warranted no rebuttal. "We will not be delving into any Dark Magic today, Hermione. Do you understand?"

Hermione was nervous and was barely able to mumble a 'yes,' so she nodded her head in agreement.

"I need you as relaxed as possible, Hermione, and I will need you to please drink a Calming Draught that I asked the elves to bring." Remus handed her the vial, and she drank it completely.

"Do you trust me?"

"Yes."

"Then open your eyes."

Remus sat over Hermione's laid out form with his arms on either side of her head, holding himself up and off of her body. As soon as she opened her eyes, she noticed Remus looking lovingly into them, but before she could enjoy his gaze, she felt him transport into her mind and begin examining her memories. She felt him working to make some semblance of time and place amongst all that her mind presented him with. Hermione was not in control as to what images she would show him; they presented themselves to him, and he freely scrutinized them, searching for evidence of tampering. He was presented with images of her and Severus at their session and the fear and excitement that that unconventional session brought; he witnessed and felt Hermione's friendship and occasional passion with Harry; he witnessed Hermione's affection for him during dinner and during her time in his chambers with him and Severus.

Hermione was embarrassed at being so exposed. She was lying bare for Remus to see, truly see who she was, her memories and the emotions behind them. This was an exposure of such an intimate nature that nudity seemed insignificant when compared to this experience. Hermione continued to feel Remus in her mind. She felt his gentleness and caring. She felt his tenderness as he examined her memories, gently casting aside those he was not there to see or that would cause her shame or embarrassment.

Hermione didn't know if Remus was too caught up in examining her memories, or if he could both review them while also feeling her current emotional state. She lay underneath him, and as he examined her mind, she was in awe at the tender care he took with her. He was a gentle soul. Amazing, really, considering his lycanthropy and the beast that lay within. But this man in her mind possessed most of the qualities she searched for in a man. It was with this realization that Hermione began to contemplate a future with him.

She cared for him, really cared for and desired this man deeply. He was gentle and kind, tender and humble. He was also strong and protective. He was everything Hermione knew she wanted in a man. But she remained a conflicted woman with deep-set desires that she needed answers to before being able to move on with her life. She only hoped that her future would wait around for her.

Remus searched for those brief moments in Severus' chambers, and when he found the delicate silver web masking the memories, Hermione could sense his deep sadness. She could sense his exploration of that brief moment in her life, and eventually she felt the loneliness his departure created as he removed himself from her mind.

"Hermione, my dear." Remus lovingly coaxed her out of her light slumber.

Hermione awoke to find Remus softly claiming her lips, and when he slowly pulled away, he said, "I will wait for you, Hermione."

Hermione sat up in Remus' bed and held onto him as he brought his lips to hers once more and they kissed properly. When it ended, Hermione asked, "Remus, I care for you deeply; you do know that? And yet I'm embarrassed to admit that I'm not ready. Would you really wait?"



"I said I would, Hermione," Remus said with conviction. "You must understand that I feel privileged that you have allowed me access to your memories, and while I took care to search only those memories of which we spoke, I was also exposed to many others, all of which allowed me to know you deeper. I loved you before you allowed me into your mind, and now I'm certain that I love you... all of you." Despite his professions of love, Remus was saddened. He sighed, sat back, and helped Hermione to stand.

Hermione could hear the sadness in his voice and was reminded of the sadness she'd felt when he was in her mind. "Remus, tell me what you saw. Did you find evidence of a Memory Charm?"

Remus looked at her, and without uttering a word, his eyes spoke for him.

"Remus, tell me when."

"When you were with Severus, just after he left to make tea. You were in his lounge thinking, and then there was the web."

~\*~

Hermione and Remus retired to his lounge to attempt to eat their dinner. It was a beautiful and delicious spread. As usual, the house-elves seemed to continuously work on outdoing themselves.

They ate in relative silence until Hermione finally said, "Remus, I feel like a herd of hippogriffs trampled over me. Do you have a Headache Potion?"

"Sorry, Hermione, but no. I don't have anything. I only suffer with headaches after my transformation, and it gets taken care of with the muscle relaxant Poppy gives me. I'm sure I could get some from Poppy or Severus...."

"No." Hermione looked away from her half-touched food into Remus' face, and with a forced smile she said, "I shall wait until I return to my flat. Remus," Hermione continued, "what are we to do?"

"Well, before we plan anything, let us examine what we know. It is clear to me that we were correct in our assumption that you have had a Memory Charm cast on you. It is also a fact that you have bruises on your wrists and ankles and you have no recollection of how you obtained those bruises. In my brief examination of your other memories of the past thirty hours, I have not found any situation where you might have obtained them. It is also a fact that the last memory I found before I encountered the web is of you sitting on Severus' couch while awaiting tea. The next memory is of you awakening to see both Severus and I in his chambers. And as we discussed, that was approximately fifteen minutes after you and Severus departed my quarters.

"Anything else?" Remus asked to complete his investigation.

"No," Hermione stated, "I believe you have adequately covered what we know. So, Remus, what do you suggest we do now?"

"I would recommend that we go to the Headmistress and..."

"NO!" Hermione yelled as she pushed herself away from the dining table and walked toward the fireplace, leaning on its mantle, contemplating the reasons behind her proclamation. "I will not. I'm sorry, Remus, but I cannot be forced to handle my business the way someone else wants this handled. Minerva would use her position and exert her authority to get answers or to just assume the answers.... That is not what I want."

"So then what do you want, Hermione?"

"I'm not clear on that, Remus. I am rather certain that in those ten minutes I was not raped. However, I cannot explain any possible reason why Severus would cast a Binding Charm on me." Hermione looked at Remus with a fiery determination in her eyes. "No, I want my memories back, Remus, and I'm going to get them back!"

And Hermione stormed out to have her memories returned to her.

To Be Continued...

A/N:

Some might say that Severus, as a former spy, would never have forgotten to heal Hermione's binding injuries. I say "phooey." He was in a poor emotional state at the time. He'd just realized that the beast within him was no longer dormant. He almost forgot her panties, and almost forgot to heal the bruise on her face! Phooey, Phooey, Phooey!

Sorry the last two chapters weren't funny. I hope you don't mind, but it has taken a life of its own, and for now, angst rules over humor. Don't worry. We'll find our funny bone again before this is all over.

A big THANK YOU to Jackie for the beta and to the Mighty Wartcap for the re-beta and the encouragement.

Thanks to SiriusWoman for saying that this is her favorite chapter so far. Of course, she says that for every chapter!

Finally, thanks to all of you who continue to read, review, support and encourage me through the wonderful twists and turns in this little story. You are very much appreciated!

~Ruthie

## Not Myself

*Chapter 10 of 15*

Severus experiences Erectile Dysfunction. Hermione is a Sex Therapist. Will she be able to cure him?

Severus Snape, greasy git and bat of the dungeons, sat facing his unlit hearth as if bewitched. He was lost in thought, and in the empty space of his gaze, he saw himself, just as empty and without light or the heat it generated.

He felt cold. It was not an unknown emotion to him, just one that he had long forgotten.



behind, effectively ending her escape.

"Hello, Hooch," Remus said and Hermione noticed him looking between her and Hooch while maintaining a firm grip on Hermione's arm "Is something wrong here, Hermione?"

Before she could answer, she noticed Hooch peering over their shoulders into Remus' chambers through the open doorway, obviously in search of something or someone. Hermione looked toward Remus, who picked up on her silent question, and asked, "Hooch, might I ask you what you're looking for?"

"Sorry to be so nosey, chap, but I figured I would find Severus lurking in there."

"Now, why would Severus be in my chambers?"

"Don't get defensive on me, boy, I just figured that wherever Hermione was, Severus wouldn't be far behind. No one's seen him all day, and Minerva has cancelled all of his classes. Didn't you know, Remus?"

"No, I didn't notice," Remus responded, brow furrowed and deep in thought.

"Yes, well, I guess, old man, your wolf senses are getting a bit rusty. Though, isn't tomorrow night the full moon? Shouldn't you be able to smell a woman a mile away this close to your transformation?"

Remus glared at her. "What I can smell is the foul garlic you had for dinner, Hooch."

"Oh, the wolf is getting irritated and bearing his big bad teeth. Then surely you should be able to tell that Severus was absent from breakfast, absent from lunch and absent from dinner. Not to mention the scowl that Minerva has been wearing all day. She practically snapped at me when I asked her where her favorite deputy was. Not very perceptive for a werewolf, are you?"

"Would you please both stop it for a moment," Hermione asked, clearly frustrated with their banter. "What's happened to Severus? Has he visited Poppy?"

"I don't know, haven't asked."

"Well, thank you for the information and your interesting conversation, but Remus and I should be moving on. Thank you, again."

As Hooch walked away, Hermione started out in the opposite direction in search of some answers until she realized that Remus had not followed her. She turned around and noticed him still stationed in front of his open chamber door, seemingly unaware of Hermione's retreat.

"Remus," Hermione called as she walked back to where he was, "why do you look so distraught?"

"Hermione, I know you want to find Severus so you can get your memories returned to you, and I will do what I can to help. But if we can't find him, I'm afraid I will not be in control of my condition when the full moon comes tomorrow evening," Remus said as he finally lifted his head, looked into her eyes, and showed her the pain and worry that lay underneath his stare. "I'm due for my first dose of Wolfsbane tonight and my second tomorrow, just before the transformation. Without my dose tonight, it won't matter how many doses I consume tomorrow; I will not be able to maintain my faculties upon my transformation."

"Oh, Remus, I didn't realize!" Hermione shrieked in shock. "I am so sorry to be so selfish and only thinking of myself... We will need to find Severus."

"First, we have a bigger problem on our hands. If I don't get my evening dose, I will have to leave the school grounds and find a secure area where I cannot harm anyone." Remus sealed his chamber door with a wave of his wand, turned toward Hermione and said, "I haven't been without my Wolfsbane for several years. I almost don't remember what it's like to lose myself to the wolf.... We need to go see Minerva about this."

As Hermione rushed to catch up to Remus' purposeful trot, she said, "I agree, but we do not say anything about the other thing, you understand?"

"Yes."

As they approached the gargoyles leading to Minerva's office, Hermione said, "Remus, don't you think you really need to start to learn to make that for yourself?"

With a weak smile, Remus held her hand and said, "Nessie," and escorted her up the spiral staircase that presented itself upon mention of the password.

Hermione asked, "Who's 'Nessie'?"

"Nessie is Minerva's childhood pet, which now lives in Loch Ness in the Great Glen in Northern Scotland."

"You're kidding me, right?"

"No, dear, come," Remus said as he led her into the Headmistress' office upon hearing her irritable 'enter', instructing the visitors in.

"Oh, Remus, Hermione, please do come in. Sorry for my current disposition, I've been irritable all day. Anything I can help you dears with?"

"Yes, Minerva, I just found out that Severus has not been seen all day and that you have had to cancel all of his classes," Remus said as he looked upon his mentor, friend, and boss.

"Yes, that is true. Severus is at the moment... held up."

"Yes, well, then does that mean that you know where he is?"

"Yes, I do. He is in his chambers and is not to be disturbed."

"Please," Hermione said, "we need to speak with him."

"I'm sorry, but Severus is with a very special guest that has demanded that no one interrupt them. When they are through, I will know forthwith."

"Minerva, I will share with you my concern so that you can understand the gravity of this situation. I am scheduled to take my first dose of Wolfsbane tonight, as tomorrow night is the full moon. If I do not obtain tonight's dose..."

"Oh, my, yes, then tomorrow night you will not recall yourself upon your transformation."

"Yes, so you see, as Severus brews my Wolfsbane, I need to find him and drink my potion before midnight."

Hermione noticed the concern in the Headmistress' eyes.

"Remus," Minerva said, looking at both guests, "please go to your chamber and wait for my summons. I will find out what their status is and call for you as soon as I am able."

"Thank you, Minerva," Remus said, resolved to wait.

"You, Severus. Life is affording me another opportunity to spend quality time with you. To give you advice, free of all other possible motivations. There is no war to sidetrack me, and you are no longer a vehicle to wield in wartime. I am free to be the father I have always felt I should be for you, whom I desired to be for you, but whom I had to hold back, as how could I send my boy, my son, into the bowels of the devil time and time again? And yet I did. Severus, it pained me to do so. But here, life has given me an opportunity to be the man I should've been for you. The person you deserved me to be. Instead of the person I was."

Severus was crying. He hated to cry. It was good for nothing... It could only show weakness. But now, he could not help himself.

"Severus, look at me, please."

He lifted his head in response to his friend and openly wept. Severus was not a man to cry, but whether from the sheer force of his emotions or that in combination with alcohol, here with Albus, he felt he could, for once, show his vulnerability. He searched for some meaningful words to reply, but he couldn't find any. He was too caught up, too emotionally connected to this man, to hear his sincerity behind every word without being affected by it. It caused something deep within the bowels of his existence to crumble. It caused him to remember himself. He was Severus Snape, a warrior, and he would engage the beast!

~\*~

Severus and Albus talked for most of the day. They talked about fighting the beast, about winning and not allowing the monster to be in control. They talked about power and control, need and want, love and forgiveness... Albus helped Severus to realize that he had been running on instinct. Fear and anger had invaded his soul, and his instincts had taken over, causing him to head down a road it would be difficult to return by. But Albus was adamant that Severus had not turned into the beast! He had allowed his true self to come through, with his honesty, truth, and trustworthiness to outshine the beast. He hadn't taken the girl; he hadn't violated her.

Was he now free of complete culpability? No, Severus knew that he was not. But he could now bear the weight of this guilt, knowing that he had stopped himself before completely harming Hermione, before the beast had taken him to a place that he could never return from. He hadn't wanted to harm Hermione at all. He'd actually begun to be very fond of her. Yes, he'd wanted to have sex with her, but he'd also wanted to spend time with her and enjoy her company. He had let down his defenses and found he had a soft spot for the girl. He hadn't felt this way in a very long time. He wasn't accustomed to acknowledging his emotions to himself, let alone express them to another living soul.

Talking with Albus brought new life to both men, albeit even in death for the one. Albus was euphoric and jubilant, and Severus was acting as a free man would when pardoned of a lifetime of sins. Albus definitely wasn't God to pardon his sins, but he was his father--not biologically, but in every other sense of the word. And it felt good to be loved, really loved. Was he fond of this old man? Yes, but it went beyond that for him, and he was now able to admit it. He loved Albus.

Severus, needing to eat, had contacted a house-elf to bring him supper, and he'd eaten while sitting next to Albus' painting. Albus chided Severus, saying he was engaging in cruel and unusual punishment, eating in front of a dead man who was unable to ever eat again.

"What of your lemon drops? Surely you can sit and eat as many as you like, considering the painting will continue to replenish them."

"As fond as I am of my darling lemon drops, my dear boy, they cannot hold a candle to a good steak. So hurry up and finish eating before I fill up my painting with drool."

As they continued with their banter, Minerva interrupted their reverie and entered through the Floo. With her sour disposition that both men easily identified as deep worry, she said, "So, what is this? We wait outside these walls for some word, some semblance of anything, whilst the two of you eat, drink, and enjoy one another? I have half a mind to lock Albus up in my desk for the next ten hours and see if he likes being held prisoner in one's own school!"

"I could use the rest, my dear. Severus has worn me out."

Minerva walked towards the man and his picture and said, "Gentlemen, while I know you could probably spend days together, we have an urgent situation on our hands." Minerva turned to speak directly to Severus. "I have received a visit from a very concerned Remus asking about your whereabouts, as he is scheduled to have his first dose of Wolfsbane tonight, as tomorrow night is the..."

"Oh, my God," Severus exclaimed, "I've been so consumed in self-pity that I completely forgot about his potion!" Severus bolted from his chambers and into his private lab where he had been brewing the Wolfsbane for over a week. Minerva made to follow him when Albus stopped her with an "Ahem", and she picked him up and followed Severus.

Severus loomed over the boiling cauldron with a scowl on his face. He was studying its color and density, and then he knew. It would not be ready in time and the full moon would not wait. He had failed to add the vital ingredient, minced runespoor eggs: a common black market ingredient, but necessary in quantity, quality, and timeliness of introduction into the concoction.

"It's too late, I can't finish it in time," Severus solemnly said to both guests.

"Can you do without it, Severus?"

"Minerva, it's a wonder you're headmistress at all! Of course I can't do without it. It's the runespoor eggs that enhance mental ability; that is the reason the whole potion keeps Remus from dementia!" Severus was livid and began pacing the room back and forth. "There is nothing I can do to salvage this," he continued, his hands waving about in frustration. "I will have to inform Remus. There will be no avoiding the wolf this month for him."

"Severus, please don't be so cruel, this is serious!" Minerva shrieked.

"Woman, cruel I am not being! If I wanted to be cruel, I would never have brewed this damnable potion for him in the first place! I didn't want this to happen if that's what you're thinking! I was just too caught up..." he stared at his friend in the picture, "too caught up in my own madness... but then someone helped me see my way home again. I may not be able to brew this potion to completion, but I may be able to ease his pain." Severus continued with determination, "Minerva, you said that Remus came to see you?"

"Yes, he did, and I am supposed to contact him as soon as I am able."

"Well then, please see to it that you do, and bring him here. I shall like to talk with him."

"Very well, I'll be right back," Minerva said, and within moments she was gone.

"What are you thinking, Severus?" Albus asked.

"I'm not certain it will work, but let me ask you a question. Where does Remus go for the transformation?"

"I don't know what he does lately, but he used to go to the Shrieking Shack. Of course, I never approved of that. It always made me feel even sorer for the poor boy. He deserves more respect and better surroundings."

"I'd agree. I've never regarded him so much as to ask him where he spends his transformation. I always assumed that he remained at the castle. Of course, when he was properly remedied. I would venture to guess that it has been a great while since he lost himself to the wolf, as I've brewed his Wolfsbane for several years now."

Minerva returned with Remus and Hermione, and as soon as Severus saw the haunted looks in their eyes, he knew that Minerva had informed them. With no safe way to remain free from guilt, he approached the pair and said, "Remus, I apologize, but I failed to add the vital ingredient and as such, there is no way the Wolfsbane will be ready for you."

"I understand, Severus... I know you tried."

"No, I didn't try. And that is not excusable!"

"You have never failed me before in the several years you have taken it upon yourself to provide me with the Wolfsbane, and I remain forever grateful. By the way, it's only

one month, right?" Remus tried to have a positive outlook, but he failed as he was truly scared of losing his mind to the wolf.

"Severus, what are you saying? That you didn't try?" Hermione was upset and assumed that Severus purposefully ruined the potion.

"Hermione, I spent the day... *not myself*, and I lost track of time."

"You spent the day *not yourself*? Well, now Remus will spend the day *not himself*, but he'll be a werewolf!"

"Hermione, please," Remus interjected, "don't make this more difficult. Severus has apologized, and I accept his apology. I believe him that this was not done purposefully. He has never let me down before, and there is no reason I should believe otherwise now."

"Hermione," Severus said, "I can understand your suspicions, but I've never done anything to harm Remus. But I can understand why you would think that I'm evil personified. Until recently, I thought the same myself."

Hermione looked at Severus Snape, trying to find the evil within, or even trying to find the imitation Severus she had encountered so many times during the last week, but she only found sincerity. Something must be wrong because this side of him didn't seem to suit him either.

"Severus," Albus said, "why don't you share with us what you're planning, in light of the current situation."

"Ah, yes, thank you, Albus," Severus said as he motioned for Remus and the others to sit down in the available chairs around his desk. He removed his chair from behind his desk to sit amongst his guests. "Remus, I may not be able to provide you with the Wolfsbane so you can maintain your faculties during your transformation, but what I think I may be able to do is provide you with high doses of an aesthetic agent used to relieve severe pain. If ingested in higher quantities and with a higher concentration, it has the potential to put the wolf to sleep so that he can sleep through this transformation, and essentially, he will not feel the need to... well, do what wolves do."

"It sounds dangerous," Minerva said.

"Oh, it is. I've never made it and I've never seen it administered in the high dosage that I feel this will require. But I am willing to try if Remus is."

"Severus, I am willing to try anything not to be lost to the wolf. Not to mention the danger I pose in that wild state."

"It will not be easy. I will need to attend to the medication without fail, and I will have to have constant access to you, Remus, to administer your doses, as I believe they will need to be administered every hour or so in order to keep you highly medicated.

"Minerva, we will need a safe place to house Remus, just in case this is not successful."

"You're putting yourself in grave danger, Severus, if this doesn't work!" Minerva cried.

"Greater danger would be to leave him alone without any chance of coming through this unscathed."

"Severus, you can't do this alone!" Minerva continued her worrying.

"I am always alone, dear. I can do it because it is who I am."

"Severus, no. I can and will help you," Hermione said. "You will not be alone."

To Be Continued...

A/N:

High Five to Jackie, my first beta, and to Wartcap for the re-beta and the constant encouragement! High Five to SiriusWoman for the once over.

- \* Will Remus lose himself to the wolf?
- \* Will Hermione and Severus shag while the wolf is asleep?
- \* Has the talk with Albus put Severus on the road to recovery?
- \* Will IT begin working at the command of IT's owner now?
- \* Is Hermione the only one who IT will respond to?
- \* Who will get the girl in the end?
- \* Come on now, don't tell me you've never thought of why the heck doesn't Remus just learn how to make the darn potion himself, right?
- \* Don't you just want to shag Remus?

Some of the above questions are courtesy of SiriusWoman.

~Ruthie

## Epitome of Contradiction

Chapter 11 of 15

Severus experiences Erectile Dysfunction. Hermione is a Sex Therapist. Will she be able to cure him?

Lazily lathering her hair, Hermione mentally reviewed her upcoming agenda for the day. While she was thrilled that her business was picking up, she was so overwhelmed with new clients that she wished her business was not so popular. She closed her eyes and continued lathering her hair in the slow, yet thorough, circle patterns taught to her by her mum. Most people loved to bathe, but Hermione loved to shower. Nothing made her feel better than a wonderfully hot and steamy shower. She loved how the

fragrances enveloped her and the feel of the water caressing her skin as it cascaded down her body. Showering was always a special time when she could plan her day, think through any worries or concerns, plan out her career, think of her relationships, etc. Her business was one which she mostly planned during her showers, and with its increased popularity, the shower had proven itself a worthy place for planning. Apparently she'd found her niche, and with no other competition, she was looking forward to a prosperous career.

'So then, why the hell aren't I happy?' Hermione thought as she stepped under the shower spray to rinse her hair. She had everything she had desired and had been working toward for the last ten years. A prosperous business in the field she loved; a brilliant flat full of design possibilities; and a man who loved her. 'What more could a woman want?'

"Indeed, what more could a woman want?" she asked aloud. "I want..." Hermione said, answering her own question. "No, I *desire* a strong man to want me, desire me, need me, and lay claim to me. He must be possessive; he must be strong, protective... yes, he must long for me and crave me. He must be willing to learn my body, what turns me on and what turns me off. He needs to be a considerate lover, one who ensures that I am satisfied many times over. He must be gentle, yet strong and domineering."

At hearing herself say these things out loud, a deep chuckle escaped her and she leaned back against the shower wall, allowing the spray to hit her face and caress down her body. Hermione had had these thoughts before, but they had never been verbalized and had surely never left the recesses of her mind.

She knew she was being hypocritical with her nefarious thoughts betraying women's liberation. Yes, she could no longer deny it; she was the epitome of contradiction. A woman who demanded sexual freedom, yet wanted a man to claim her, take her, and dominate her in the bedroom. That's why she was always confused.

Sexual liberation, sexual freedom, sexual independence, whatever the hell you wanted to call it, she wanted it and even expected it. Was she part of the women's liberation movement? That was difficult to answer. She'd definitely benefited from the pioneers of this movement, and while she was not an active supporter, she expected the freedoms that came from said movement. How was it then that, as a woman who benefited from women's liberation, she could so wantonly desire the traditional machismo male with rote possessive instincts? She wanted her man to possess that exhilarating sense of power and strength. And while she desired those attributes in a man, she'd never had a relationship like that and thus had never been truly satisfied. She'd met nice and decent men, wonderful in all aspects, except in the one place she needed it most: the bedroom. For years she had searched for the one man to make her completely happy, but they'd all fallen short in one area or the other.

Was it possible to have everything? Her career was spent helping people obtain that which they desire, whether it was connected to sex or not. As was human nature, she found that sexual dysfunction or sexual dissatisfaction were not so much connected to the physical aspects of sex, but to emotional attachments, needs, wants, desires, love, and most importantly, it was all connected to the individual's perceived happiness. And she was not happy. Her current sexual partner was sweet, kind, and gentle. Harry could be nothing less... and nothing more. While he met a need to sate her, she was never fully satisfied. She continued to experience difficulty climaxing. She attempted to change her fate by being in control with Harry and guiding him to meet her needs. He was a good schoolboy and listened well to her instructions. But in the few days they had been together, she had only climaxed once, and she had been in fantasy mode, thinking of riding Severus instead of her best friend.

And she felt continuously horny. The most erotic experience of her life had been with Severus and Remus just days ago, when she'd felt sensual and desirable. Then Remus had spoiled the possibilities by being a good boy and backing out of what had promised to be an exciting evening indeed. She had never had a *ménage à trois*, but once in the moment, she was desperate to see it through.

Remus....

As Hermione continued with her cleansing routine, her thoughts turned to Remus and how worried she was for him and his unavoidable transformation later that evening.

He was such a complex man. Hermione could not quite fathom how he had loved her, for God knows how long now and never said anything, never approached her, never given her one inkling of attention. Granted, she had been gone from Britain for a long time, but if he'd really wanted her, he would have found a way, magical or not, to get to her. But no, he'd remained passive and done nothing to claim her even though he desired her. He had mentioned that his life was complicated due to his Lycanthropy and that he had wanted to protect her from that part of his life. Hermione thought that, in reality, he must be scared of commitment, or scared of rejection, or scared of whatever. His Lycanthropy had not been a concern for several years now, as he had a consistent Potions master brewing for him. His employment was steady, and since the downfall of Voldemort and the changes in the Ministry, he had earned the respect of those in power and the common folk. Of course, an Order of Merlin, Second Class, helped to shape their perception.

Regardless of his reasoning, Remus was a complicated man. He was both a gentle soul and wild, good and feral, gentle and brutish, calm and windswept. He was such a complicated man, a dichotomy of everything wonderful and everything untamed.

Thinking of this complex man, Hermione recognized that he very well may be the man to meet her desires. And while she typically saw him as sweet, gentle and kind, with his Lycanthropy he had to have a deep feral nature; at least, she hoped so. Hermione was excited at making a connection between her deep desire for someone to claim her and make her feel sensual and desirable with a man who had already expressed his love for her. Maybe, just maybe, he would be the one to meet all of her desires!

Yearning set residence, and with a practiced hand Hermione reached for her body oil, lubricated her hands, and began the gentle slope down her body toward her fluttering core. She found her goal and, recalling Remus' calm and protective nature during his exploration of her memories, and also remembering his untamed and passionate kiss just before he'd urged her to leave his chambers, Hermione slowly and ever so gently massaged herself. Her body reacted with a gentle gyration as if on an imaginary penis. Leaning against the shower stall, the water continuing to spray over her body, her hands were trapped at her core, unable to let go until she filled her desire. She curved her body to gain greater access, her right hand continued its manipulations while, with her left hand, she found her new target and began to explore the sensitive ring she knew would send her over the edge. One, two, three gentle probes later and her body began the welcoming quakes. As the tremors increased to a crescendo, guttural sounds of pleasure escaped her, and with her climax, she screamed, "Severus!"

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With very little time between clients, Hermione's secretary, Wilma, brought her favorite lunch, moo shoo pork, from a nearby Chinese restaurant in Chinatown near Leicester Square in London. They sat together to eat, though Hermione was doing very little eating as she had been preoccupied all morning, and now was no different.

"Dr. Granger, are you okay?" Wilma asked, noticing Hermione's lack of interest in her favorite meal.

"Why do you ask, Wilma?" she responded without looking up, transfixed on her meal, seemingly willing herself to find interest in it.

"Sorry to intrude," Wilma apologized, "but you've just seemed a bit preoccupied this morning."

"Yes, well, it seems that you are getting to know me well. I seem preoccupied because I am," Hermione responded, offering no further explanations.

"Is there anything I can do to help, madam?"

"No, Wilma, and don't call me madam. You make me feel like an old witch."

"Sorry, Doctor. You know, you've barely touched your food," Wilma observed.

"Yes, I seem to have a crook in my neck and lower back pain, and I can't seem to concentrate on anything today, let alone food."

"Were you doing exercise or something? You must have really strained your body. I'm sure you could use some Bruise Healing paste and possibly an Invigoration Draught. I'll go to the apothecary and get you some."

Remembering her private shower acrobatics this morning, she responded, "Yes, I did strain it, and I appreciate your offer, that is very kind of you."

"Well, we can't have our clients complaining..."

"Complaining?" Hermione asked, cutting her off. "Who complained?"

"Doctor, it's no big deal, but when Mr Knoll left your office, before he entered the Floo, he said that you have his name wrong because you called him 'Severus' several times."

"I did what?" Hermione exclaimed.

"Yes, Doctor."

"Very interesting," Hermione responded, staring off into nothingness while trying to recall her session with Mr Knoll. "Thank you for his feedback. If you are done, I think I could use those items from the apothecary now."

"Right away," Wilma said as she stood up and began clearing the table of their lunch. "I can't leave before we each choose our fortune cookie," she said as she held three cookies in her hand and presented them for Hermione to choose.

Once Hermione chose her cookie, Wilma chose hers, and they opened their cookie and read their fortune. It had only been several weeks since Wilma and Hermione had begun working together, but they had developed a routine of checking their fortunes after each Chinese meal.

"What does yours say, Doctor?"

Hermione cracked open her cookie, placed a bit of the delicious confection in her mouth, and unrolled the little fortune. "It says, 'Engage in group activities that further transformation,' and my lucky numbers are '10, 28, 34, 49, 5, and 7'."

"That sounds like a great idea, Doctor."

As Wilma left the office, Hermione responded, "Yes, that's a great idea, indeed." As her thoughts wandered to her night with Remus and Severus, she hoped that another opportunity would present itself soon.

Hermione held onto the table as she lifted herself off of her seat at the dining room table and was reminded of her strenuous ~~exercise~~ earlier in the day. It seemed that if she was going to engage in any more individual acrobatics, she was going to have to get used to bathing instead of showers. After all, she wasn't a contortionist.

She returned to her handsome office; she briefly admired her chosen décor of mahogany woods paired with deep burgundy leather and golden yellow walls. She was a Gryffindor through and through. Her thoughts returned to her slip of the tongue with Mr Knoll. Apparently she had called him 'Severus' even though his first name was Grassé. And you can't get any more different than that. Hermione couldn't deny her subconscious anymore. That was her second Freudian slip of the day, and the day was only half gone. Freud was correct; the id could be stronger than the ego. And in her case, she guessed that her entire unconscious experience was all primitive id, full of irrationality, emotionality, and full of her wants.

"Look at me, I sound like my old professor." And that definitely was not self-complimentary. Hermione was frustrated with herself for being unable to control her basic emotions. "I need a fucking therapist. No," she clarified to herself, "what I need is a real fuck!"

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Unable to concentrate on her work and desiring not to screw up yet another patient, Hermione completed her session with her 1:30 appointment, after having at least two blackout daydreaming sessions, for which she decided, in all good conscience, she would not charge him. She asked Wilma to cancel the remaining two clients before her muddled brain caused her to go out of business. She was mentally exhausted and found that she couldn't concentrate on anything. Well, that wasn't entirely true; despite all attempts to concentrate on her work, her mind kept wandering to Severus. He was a powerful and controlling wizard, and it was those qualities that pooled her panties. Yet, she was concerned that it was those same qualities that had caused him to Obliviate ten minutes of her memory. She wanted those memories back, and yet she was frightened that in finding out what had occurred during that time, she would hate him and no longer desire him. She was being stupid and irrational. Of course, she needed to find out what happened! Knowing was better than not knowing. Wasn't it?

Regardless, she was making up her mind and, despite her wavering, she was going to barge ahead and do what she could to find out. She extracted herself from behind her desk and approached her office Floo, which she had solely for her private use. Contacting Harry's flat, she was surprised when Ron answered.

"Whoa, hiya, Hermione! What a pleasant surprise. What can we do you for?"

"Interesting question, Ron," she responded with her mind deeply rooted in the gutter.

"Nothing interesting about it," he said with the not so unfamiliar confusion that took hold wherever Hermione was concerned.

"I'd like to pop over. I assume that Harry is there." Hermione presented it as a statement, though she was waiting for his reply.

"He sure is. Come through whenever you're ready," Ron said, and the last thing Hermione saw before the connection was temporarily disconnected was Ron stepping aside and then calling for Harry. She collected her cloak and purse, said good-bye to Wilma, and entered the Floo.

Hermione emerged into Harry's flat, gave Ron a big hug and set her handbag and cloak down on a nearby chair as Harry emerged from his bedroom. Her eyes traced over his perfect body as it glistened from his recent shower. A towel wrapped around his waist was the only thing separating Hermione from one of the reasons she'd come over this afternoon.

"Sorry, love, I was in the shower," Harry said as he gave her a peck on the cheek.

"Shower? Harry, did you just wake up?"

"Not so recently. More like ten-ish or so, though I was lounging around a bit," Harry responded, preparing himself for Hermione's usual diatribe.

"Harry, when are you going to get a job?"

"Oh, please, Hermione," Harry answered with his usual retort, "don't get stuck on that trip again. I'm stinking rich, Hermione; I don't need to work."

"Well, good for you, that makes one of us. Don't you want to give back to society, have a job that means something?"

"Bloody hell, Hermione," Ron interrupted, "would you continue to work if the Ministry handed millions of Galleons over to you for defeating Voldemort?"

"Harry's right. Don't get me started on that again," she responded, clearly frustrated and in the maternal role she usually felt was necessary with Ron. "First off, that money should never have been given to Harry. While he was prophesied to fight Voldemort, in the end he did not kill him. That honor falls to Severus. And secondly, Harry should be contributing to society, wizard or Muggle, I need not care which, as long as he is doing something productive and beneficial."

"Hermione," Harry responded, attempting to divert the conversation, "if I worked, then I wouldn't be at your beck and call."

"You're not at my beck and call, Harry." Hermione was disheartened that Harry would think that she expected to have him at her whim. Which she had to admit was true, but she hated that he realized it too.



"If I can admit it, then you should at least acknowledge how it benefits you.... Hermione, please," Harry continued seductively, trying to derail her thoughts. He took her hand in his and brought it up to his bare and still moist chest, over his heart. "Can't you feel my heart, love? It yearns for you, and there are other things that yearn for you." His plan was working. She bit her bottom lip and gave him a sheepish smile.

"What the bloody hell are you two doing?" Ron exclaimed, looking at his two best friends with bulging eyes expressing his shock and dismay and his bulging something else expressing his involuntary excitement.

"I'm just enjoying my friend, Ron," Harry said while never taking his eyes away from Hermione.

"Do you enjoy Ron the same way?" Hermione responded, feigning a sincere inquiry.

Ron looked from one friend to the other in complete bewilderment. "What the hell are you both carrying on about?"

"How can I, Hermione, when he has such a foul attitude?"

"Maybe you need to give him a kiss to shut him up," Hermione responded, continuing their playful performance.

"Interesting idea, but I think he would enjoy your kisses more than mine."

"He's had my kisses."

"And I bet he wants some more."

"If we're only speaking of kisses, Harry, I've got more important things to do."

"You know, guys," Ron interrupted, unable to understand why they were speaking of him instead of to him, "I'm right here."

"He's interested in anything and everything about you, love."

"Really, and how would you know what he's interested in... love?"

"I'm right here!" Ron exclaimed, trying to get through to his two friends. Though he was beginning to think they were not being so friendly toward him at all.

"He's my best friend," Harry replied, ignoring Ron once again. "I know him like I know you."

"You don't know me, Harry."

"I know you... I know that you want *everything*."

"Well, who wouldn't?"

"Just what is everything?" Ron asked, trying to interject himself into their not so private conversation.

"You tell him, Harry, since you seem to know me so well."

"You want your cake and to eat it too."

"Now that's a way to get around not answering the question." Hermione smirked. "So, go ahead then." She was getting tired, not only of this game with Harry but also because he could so blatantly assume that he knew her. How could he, when she didn't even know herself?

"Yeah, go ahead," Ron said in his attempt to gain an inside view into his complex friend.

"Hermione wants..." Harry paused for dramatic effect, "passionate sex."

"Wrong...." Hermione looked at her friend somberly, as there was some part of her that wanted him to be right. To be able to so completely know her that he would help her to shed some light on herself. "You're wrong, Harry. What I want is... *powerful sex*."

"What's the difference?" Harry responded, with what appeared to Hermione to be deep sincerity and interest in understanding her and her well-being.

"Yeah, what's the bloody difference?" Ron asked, which Hermione assumed was more out of his sheer lack of common sense and lack of sensitivity than interest.

"Passion, Ron, is equated to love and gentleness. I've had that and have that." Hermione quickly glanced at Harry, then turned back toward Ron to finish her explanation. "I love passionate sex, but sometimes a woman wants something different." Hermione removed herself from Harry's couch and paced his ample lounge. "I want powerful sex where I am lusted after, needed, desired, and..." She looked at her friends and decided that if she was exposing her secrets, she might as well say it all. Turning away, she finally said the words that simply described her sexual deviance. "I want a man to... claim me."

Harry just stared at her with his doe eyes, communicating his surprise as well as his working through this newfound knowledge. Ron didn't take any time to process and quipped, "Bloody hell, Hermione, you want to be a cave woman?"

"I can give you that," Harry softly responded, ignoring Ron's wisecrack.

"What did you say, Harry?" Ron was puzzled and Hermione realized how much she preferred his friendship from a distance.

"No, you can't." Hermione redirected her attention towards Harry.

"Yes, I can," Harry stressed a bit more emphatically.

"No, you can't," Hermione reiterated. She didn't want to hurt his feelings, but she didn't want for him to delude himself either.

"I can," Ron interrupted.

"No, *you* can't." Hermione turned toward Ron to make sure that he understood her emphasis on *they/you/* was directed toward him, and in that understanding he could save himself any further delusions and, most importantly, keep himself from being a nuisance.

"Hermione," Harry proposed, "maybe we can... together. After all, two wizards are better than one, and more powerful."

Harry walked up to Hermione and gently grabbed her by the waist to turn her toward him. He laced his right hand through her hair and looked into her eyes to show his desire for her. With some unspoken language apparently known only to men, he motioned for Ron to join him in his attempts to *claim* Hermione. She closed her eyes, enjoying Harry's touch and the gentle sensations cascading down her body. At his tender probing, she opened her mouth to him, and that's when she felt it. A nibbling on her ear, which she surmised was Ron, as she was busy invading Harry's mouth.

Pulling away, she looked at both boys, and before she could utter a word, Harry said, "Don't turn away from us, baby. I need you; we need you. Can't you tell? I want to feel

myself inside you..."

"Yeah," Ron added, "and... and I want to make you mine, yeah, eat you until you beg me to stop."

"Okay," Hermione chuckled as she extracted herself from both men, "I can't take this anymore."

"So, you think we're funny, do you?" Ron asked in all seriousness, making the situation even more amusing to Hermione.

"I'm sorry, boys," Hermione tried to respond through her laughter, "I just can't do this. You two are the wrong pair."

"Wrong pair?" Ron asked.

"This is just bloody perfect!" Hermione exclaimed. "Just when I need to confide in someone, my best friends are men, and this is too awkward to share!"

"Yes, we're men, thanks for noticing, but we're your friends, too. Please, Hermione, we really do care about you," Harry said, and Hermione loved how he always seemed so sincerely interested.

"Yeah, friends who want to get into my pants."

"Wouldn't be the first time," Harry playfully added.

"You guys need to tell me something?" Ron asked, feeling left out.

"No!" shouted Hermione and Harry simultaneously.

"You might as well tell me, you know. I'm bound to find out sooner or later. I'll wear you both down. I will, I swear it."

"Ron, you are so mature," Hermione said facetiously. "Seriously, boys, I am troubled."

"Dr. Potter here, at your service. Just park your pretty tush over on my couch, love, and let's have ourselves a bit of a talk." Harry held out his hand, and when she accepted it, he guided her toward his couch once again.

"You'd make a horrid therapist, Harry."

"But I make a good friend."

"That you do."

"Hermione," Harry asked, "is this about Snape?"

She laughed. "Yes, I guess it is."

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Hermione let it all out. She explained, as best she could, her desires and the two candidates in her life she felt could meet her needs. She shared with them her evening with Severus and Remus; Remus' eventual confession to caring about her; the missing ten minutes while she was with Severus; and her evening plans to keep Remus safe. She was clear to leave them with her understanding that she had not been violated by anyone during the ten minutes missing from her life. She explained her confidence in her knowledge of her own body and of knowing if anything were amiss. She was pleased that they seemed to take her word for it.

"Hermione," Ron began after contemplating Hermione's predicament, "you shared that Snape was with Dumbledore all day, so why don't you ask him?"

"Ask who, Severus?"

"No, Dumbledore."

"Ron, you're brilliant!" Hermione yelled, throwing herself at him and giving him a bear hug and a kiss on the cheek.

"Funny," Ron responded proudly, "my new girlfriend told me the same thing just last night."

"Why, Ron, you didn't share anything about a new girlfriend," Hermione said, rather pleased for him.

"Do I know her?" Harry asked.

"No, mate, I went out last night with Fred and George and that's when I met Frances. She's beautiful."

"And yet, despite this beautiful new girlfriend, you were going to have sex with me?"

"Hermione, how could I not help out a friend in need?"

"You are so philanthropic, Ron."

~\*~

Hermione inspected the damage and was pleased with her handiwork. She had effectively disrupted life at Hogwarts. Not irreparably, but just enough so that only the transfiguration expertise of its Headmistress would be required to mend her disaster.

Using a Disillusionment Charm, and careful not to be seen by anyone lest they see through the charm, Hermione set about her planned distraction by Transfiguring as many Hogwarts paintings into baby bunnies as she could. This proved rather an easy distraction to perform as the incantation was something she'd learned in second year. With minimal effort, she soon had over two hundred bouncing baby bunnies making their way around the castle. Still under stealth, she walked toward the familiar gargoyles and waited for Minerva to depart. Even from her current distance, she recognized Filch's howl and the subsequent tirade that always followed it. Hermione was quite pleased with herself and this plan that she'd devised. Filch would be the one typically in charge of returning the school to normal, but as a Squib he could not do this task alone. Even if Minerva Transfigured all the little creatures, first she and Filch had to find them all, mobile little creatures as they are, Transfigure them, then return them to their mounting place. Satisfied with her results, she didn't have long to wait for Minerva to run out of her office, down the gargoyles and down the hallway toward Filch's howling. Although Hermione was pretty sure that Minerva's password remained the same as yesterday--after all, Minerva didn't share the paranoid traits of a certain dark haired wizard who she wanted to get to know in the biblical sense--she jumped onto the stairs before the stone creature moved into its typical guarding position.

Once inside, Hermione grabbed her prize, Disillusioned it as well, and ran toward Remus' chambers, as he had agreed to leave it unwarded for her to enter with ease. To her surprise, Remus was present and was looking toward the door that opened and shut seemingly of its own accord. "Hermione?" he asked, searching the empty space for her Disillusioned form. She responded by removing her Disillusionment Charm and handing him two very precious gifts.

"Bunnies?" he questioned. "How adorable!"

"Yes, just make sure you keep them secured until I am done speaking with Dumbledore and have returned him safely."

"Consider it done," Remus responded, though he was busy playing with his two cuddly friends.

~\*~

"Oh, Hermione, how are you, dear?" Minerva greeted her as she was Levitating a painting back to its original position. Hermione noticed her usually professional hair bun was messy and off center, and she began to feel a bit of remorse. A 'bit' being the optimal word.

"I'm well, thank you," she responded, and feigning interest, she added, "What's happened here, Professor?"

"Oh, I would imagine that some first or second-years who have just learned a bit of Transfiguration decided to have some fun with us today."

"Do you require some assistance?" Hermione offered, though she was desperate for her offer to be declined.

"No, dear, but thank you. All of the little creatures have been found. Well, not quite all, I think we are still missing a handful, but a simple Levitation Charm will bring things back to normal soon enough."

"What were the paintings Transfigured into?" She was getting good at this acting thing.

"Rabbits. Well, bunnies, to be precise. But enough about my problems, dear. I know you are here to give Remus comfort and to assist Severus. You run along, and I'll meet with you three early this evening to discuss the arrangements."

"If I find any bunnies, I'll bring them over."

"Thank you, dear."

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"Are you finally going to tell me what you and Albus talked about?" Remus asked her, searching her face for an inkling of their discussion. "You were with him for over an hour, and I've been waiting all this time."

"Yes, of course, Remus. I apologize. Why don't you run those two bunnies up to Minerva, and upon your return I'll share everything I have learned with you."

While Remus was gone, Hermione mentally reviewed all that Dumbledore had shared with her. She had placed him in a precarious position, first expecting him to divulge his private discussion with Severus, and then expecting him to keep her abduction and subsequent conversation with him private. If it weren't for the fact that they couldn't join hands, she would've made him swear to an Unbreakable Vow. Never in her wildest dreams would she ever have imagined having to ask a dead man to keep a secret.

Sitting on Remus' lounge, Hermione absently rubbed the soft leather upholstery as she processed her newfound information. Apparently she had confronted Severus, and in her drunken state had begun screaming at him. Albus was not clear as to how that transpired or as to what exactly she'd confronted him on, but Hermione assumed that it was not necessary to the entire story. What was important was that Severus had made to violate her. She never would have guessed it, but Remus had been right. Although, she was relieved to learn that he'd had enough willpower to stop himself. And, ashamed with himself, he could not bear her remembering his actions and had erased her memories. That was also a violation. The more she thought about it, the more she realized how horrible the whole scene must have been. She could only imagine, as she held no memory of it, how frightened she must have been. Dumbledore spoke of Severus' *monster* returning, and his eventual internal battle, which Dumbledore helped him overcome.

He also spoke to Hermione about *instincts* and fighting against the *beast*. As a therapist, she was intrigued with Severus' internal struggle and with the apt guidance Dumbledore provided to help Severus prevail over his past evils. Hermione noted to herself that Dumbledore did a fantastic job and could have easily been a therapist.

Hermione examined her wrists and ankles. Through time, as well as her use of the Bruise Healing paste that Wilma had bought her earlier that day, the bruises caused by the Binding Charm were gone. With no memories to recall and now no physical evidence of this violation attempt, Hermione felt as if she were in a dream. As if Dumbledore had been speaking of these events happening to another. This was just all very surreal, and despite her wanting to find something to fight against, she held no hatred or animosity toward Severus. Somehow, knowing how he'd tortured himself brought satisfaction, and retribution seemed excessive.

She recalled last night's conversation with Severus, when he blamed himself *for not trying*, and how he had spent the day *not himself*. She had noticed his sincerity, though she'd had no idea what struggles and demons he'd been dealing with. More importantly, Hermione recalled the evening in question. Upon returning to her flat she had been upset, thinking he'd been *noble*, but in reexamining his order to Remus, to take her home and make love to her, he had not given up on her as she had thought, but was protecting her.

To top it off, Remus had been right. This had been the first time Severus failed him. Month after month, year after year, Severus had volunteered to provide Remus with his Wolfsbane, for which he received no payment, nor glory, just the gratitude of a gentleman. It was clear that in fighting his demons, he had forgotten a crucial step in the Wolfsbane brewing process, and he'd never intentionally meant to hurt Remus. More importantly, thought Hermione, Severus was working towards making amends in the only way he knew how: brewing potions to help him.

It was strange, but in Hermione's point of view, Severus had morphed from a purely foul and uncaring, albeit sexy, creature to a human being; fallible, but with a determination to improve upon what history and experience had presented him with. And wasn't that our job, as individuals? To become more than our past and our collective experiences, to improve upon what nature and nurture have given us? This exploration and internal struggle struck a chord with her. Not solely for her professional and academic interests, but they also served as a reminder that she too was on a personal quest, struggling with her desires, wants, needs, and expectations. She was a contradiction, and that was her internal toil. He had his and she had hers.

As much as she felt she needed to be angry with him, she just didn't have the desire to fight someone with similar life struggles. And while she wouldn't fight him, she could not completely allow him off the hook. She realized that her plans to best him had not really changed all that much, but had taken on new meaning, and with renewed vigor she developed cursory plans for how she would deal with him.

To Be Continued...

A/N:

A **HUGE** thank you to Jackie for the beta and to Wartcap for the re-beta and her constant encouragement!

**Muchas gracias** (many thanks) go to my dear friend, SiriusWoman, for helping me to process the plot and the once over.

Fortune Cookie: That was really my fortune for a cookie I was eating at the time I was writing!

Anyone notice anything interesting about Mr Grassé Knolls name? Hint, his name sounds like two words said over and over again regarding an ex-President. And, if you guess right, let me answer your unasked question "I am NOT that old and I was NOT born yet!"

Please don't fret! I promise you that we'll see much more of Severus in the next chapter!

Finally, **mucho amor** (much love) to all of **YOU!** Whether you review or not, I see the hits this story is receiving, and it tickles my toes to know so many of you are following this fic! Please leave me a review... That's it, go ahead, the submit button's just a little lower!

# The Lion, the Wolf, and the Snake

## Chapter 12 of 15

Severus experiences Erectile Dysfunction. Hermione is a Sex Therapist. Will she be able to cure him?

He was done. Severus completed the complicated Arithmancy calculations necessary to determine the exact dosage and density of the potion. He worked on the calculations all day, as he had to find the right balance of St. John's wort, aconite and valerian to tranquilize Remus in werewolf form. Asleep, he would cause no harm to himself or the public, as well as reducing his mental stress from the change. Thankfully, Minerva cancelled his classes once again in order to give him the time necessary to research this potion and obtain the necessary ingredients.

He examined all that he had accomplished in mere hours and was very pleased with himself. Never before had this combination been attempted, let alone cataloged. With his thorough calculations, Severus was certain of his success. He was pioneering the world of Potions... yet again. Maybe he would publish his findings in *The Pious Potioneer's Periodical* once this was all over, and he was able to discuss the outcome of his 'research' findings.

If he was concerned about anything, it was the one ingredient that he deemed necessary to keep the wolf sedated. It was the strongest of all narcosis-inducing plants, found in the Sibundoy region of Colombia. Typically, it was used in Divination, and other witchcraft, by the indigenous wizarding tribes. The effects of this narcotic usually lasted for two full days; it might persist for up to four with long periods of complete lack of consciousness. The art would be Severus' ability to use enough of the narcotic to make Remus unaware of his surroundings and of the feral urges building inside of him, but not enough to kill him or to do permanent damage. It was a challenge indeed.

The actual execution of this potion was simple enough. It lacked the complexity Severus was used to in other brews, though strangely enough, this brew was the most complicated he would ever prepare! The base potion, which only required minimum preparation time, used the most innocuous of ingredients. The difficulty lay in preparing the actual narcotic, which required harvesting from the plant an hour before its use. This was not an easy feat, considering the plant only grew in the remotest regions of South America, and transplanting was not possible due to the rapid weakening of its fragile magical properties.

Severus tilted his chair back and propped his feet up on the desk. Despite the exhilaration that usually accompanied his new creations, he had to admit that he was exhausted. Thankfully, he had completed the base potion. It was bottled and secured for traveling, as was everything else he could possibly need in order to complete the narcotic portion of the brew. Everything he required for a successful outcome was ready, with the exception of obtaining the precious narcotic. Earlier today, he had submitted an application to the Gobierno Mágico de América Latina, seeking permission to obtain the plant. They indicated that he would receive their answer within the hour... but had kept him waiting three. Naturally, his proposal was flawless, and he couldn't understand their delay. He had already received permission from the Portkey Office, at the Ministry's Department of Magical Transportation, to create the Portkeys necessary to travel to and from Colombia, so they could not be responsible for the hold up.

Shaking his head, ridding himself of his weariness, he rubbed his face and examined his progress. Although he surmised that no more than half a batch would be required, Severus completed two batches of the base potion in his quest to never be without. He was still not privy to the location Minerva had chosen to hide Remus, but he would make sure that he was ready for any and all possible scenarios.

And with that thought, Severus decided that he would need to refresh himself. After ensuring that all needed materials were packed and ready for traveling, wherever that traveling would be, he cleaned his desk and work area, then proceeded to the bathroom to shower. As he removed his clothing, his thoughts began to wander, revisiting the tumultuous events of the last couple of days. He had been driven to the brink, been in danger of falling into the pit of despair. He had almost given in to his inner beast, but thankfully had been receptive to Albus' guidance. Today would pose a new challenge for him. He would be in Hermione's company all evening while she assisted him with caring for Remus. This would indeed be difficult, as the last time he saw her she was obviously angry with him for not completing the Wolfsbane Potion. If only she knew how much regret was bottled up inside of him. Not only was he regretful for not completing the potion on time, but even more importantly, for what he almost did to Hermione, and for taking the liberty of erasing her memory of the incident.

### *Incident...*

Such a simple, yet interesting word. It can refer to almost anything. Regardless of intention, this seemingly innocent word definitely held a negative connotation. This *incident* added fuel to his already blazing pyre of failures. Despite the many accomplishments he had achieved in his field, with the Order, and most importantly, his eventual defeat of the wizarding world's greatest enemy, he was unable to expunge these failures. Yet despite them, Severus was far from being a stupid man. No... he was not stupid and he was not evil, regardless of what some people thought of him. He was not a social man. Rather than expose himself to the awkward niceties of those who were not interested in him at all, he preferred his own company. Those who were truly interested in him were either contemporaries curious about his professional endeavors, or colleagues able to get past his dry wit and gruff exterior. Then, there was the occasional admirer, like that Frances woman who came onto him a little over a month ago at the Leaky Cauldron. She was just interested in him for the fame of shagging a war hero. There was no reason for him to expose his vulnerabilities; to be rejected or badgered. Severus had always been a loner, but he learned long ago, during his own education at Hogwarts, that in order to protect himself, emotionally and physically, he must keep away from others. He relied upon the only person he could truly count on, himself.

There were few people in his life that he could consider friends, in the loosest term of the word. Of course, there was Albus, then there was Remus. He was the only one of his colleagues who was able to ignore the rougher edges of his personality and get a glimpse of the man within. Minerva was never a friend. She never bothered to get to know him. Appointing him to be her Deputy, he believed, was the influence of Albus, who apparently, even in death, was still lending leadership to the school.

Hermione, though, had seemed very interested in him. Not as a contemporary, nor a colleague, but certainly as a lover. And now, what would come of their relationship? In actual fact, it wasn't a relationship at all, at least not a romantic one. Despite the promising, interesting, and most certainly satisfying events of his first therapy session, she later sought out Remus' companionship. More importantly, during the brief moments they had spent alone together, she had accused him of lying about Remus and correctly identified that *he* was her actual patient. She was a very smart witch indeed. With the time she had spent with Remus, they had likely become involved, and she must have realized that she had been correct. Remus was not the patient in question. Unless, of course, the fates had the two men suffering from the same affliction... one could only hope.

Regardless, Severus knew that the blame lay solely with him. He had started this whole fiasco with Hermione, lying regarding his condition, attributing it to Remus, and then the *incident* that followed. Even though he had Obliviated a portion of her memory, it was evident that she was skeptical of his story. But then again, she couldn't be certain of her conclusions after his more than adequate arousal and subsequent ejaculation during his session with her. All of this supposition was confusing him. He was not used to confusion, but it was evident that he was no longer in control of the situation.

Shower completed, Severus found himself looking into his closet deciding to what to wear... again. Hermione, a woman almost twenty years his junior, had him obsessed

and preoccupied with his appearance, and that just wouldn't do. He was not a man to be infatuated with any woman, and at forty-six he was damned if he would begin now. No, he had to be in command of himself. He had to find a way to regain some semblance of control over the situation, over his life, and find a way to deal with the ramifications of the *incident*.

If he were to spend the entire evening babysitting a wolf in the company of a very delectable woman, he would need to have the upper hand. He was a Slytherin, after all. He needed to take the reins, implement his tried and true tactical maneuvers that have served him so well in the past. Severus decided that tonight would be a perfect opportunity for him to gain control of this most unmanageable situation. Just one thing was missing... a plan.

As he considered his options for dealing with Hermione, a sealed note appeared in front of him with a resonating *pop*. The wax seal bore the official emblem of the Gobierno Mágico de América Latina. He smirked to himself as he read their approval of his proposed use for the narcotic.

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'Finally,' Severus thought to himself at hearing the knock on his door. In his opinion, Minerva was quite overdue for informing him where she had decided to safely house Remus during his transformation this evening. He opened the door and felt the unbalance try to take him over again.

"Hello, Severus. How are you?"

"Don't you have a business to run, Miss Granger?" Severus quipped as he eyed the unexpected guest at his door.

"After our session on Monday, and our time together on Tuesday evening, I believe you can call me Hermione," she said as she walked past him into his lounge.

"Hermione," Severus whispered, surprised that she would so casually bring up their more stimulating encounters, "the question still stands."

"I've rescheduled my afternoon appointments."

"Well then, don't you have a social life? You continually choose to spend your time with Remus and myself."

"You and Remus *are* my social life."

"My dear girl, you are in your twenties. Two middle-aged wizards are your social life?"

"Well, you two, and Harry as well."

"I still fail to see what I can do for you."

Severus watched as laughter overtook Hermione and he was amazed at her childish behavior. "And I fail to see what you find so amusing, Miss Granger."

"Hermione," she corrected him.

"Hermione."

"I'm sorry, Severus, for some reason I find that particular inquiry rather amusing."

Severus thought for a moment before responding, to be sure he ascertained the situation for what it really was. "Yes, I understand. It could be construed as being rather... suggestive."

Severus noticed Hermione's surprise at his correct speculation, and she responded, "Yes, it can. You read me like a book."

He felt he was doing a fairly decent job at maintaining the upper hand, but was surprised with Hermione's lack of resistance and her apparent sincerity. Regardless, it was clear what was on her mind and, as she freely exposed her vulnerabilities, he felt it was only right to employ his Slytherin tactics. To make his intentions known, Severus placed his right hand on her lower back and guided her to sit down on his lounge, where he joined her. Severus turned to face her, bending his leg underneath him and draping his arm across the back of the couch. In this position Severus was opening up his body to her and presenting himself as sincere and unguarded. He began teasing her tendril curls that fell onto his hand and was pleased to see the immediate effects it had on her. "I would think that Remus would be jealous of his witch spending time in my company."

Not answering his suggested question, Hermione responded, "I like to keep my options... open." She maneuvered closer to him so that their thighs met and Severus could feel the heat radiating off of her body. She was completely aroused and Severus was pleased that he still had IT. With nothing more than a tender touch and a hint of vulnerability, he possessed the power to kindle a witch's smoldering passion in the tips of his long and nimble fingers. As he was reveling in his own salacious talents, Hermione moved closer and asked, "By the way, how's your witch, Severus?"

"I find myself in rather similar circumstances as you, Hermione," Severus purred close to her ear as he continued playing with her hair. "It is best to keep one's options open, as you say."

For a while, they simply looked at each other, trying to ascertain the motive of the other. Severus could see the wheels turning behind Hermione's gaze and decided that now would be the perfect opportunity to set the tone for the evening. With that decision made, he tentatively reached out and touched her cheek gently with his index finger, tracing a delicate line toward her waiting lips. Hermione closed her eyes and visibly trembled. Acutely attuned to her, Severus relished her reaction to his touch. Emboldened by her acquiescence, he moved closer and placed a gentle, lingering kiss on those lips. Her reaction was just as gentle and tender, conveying consent mixed with uncertainty. Reluctantly pulling away, Severus noticed her eyes remained closed, apparently enjoying the sensations he was giving her. He returned to her lips and asked for entrance with his tongue. He felt Hermione smile underneath his lips. When he pulled back again to look into her eyes she was staring at him and returned his tongue's request with a chaste kiss.

"Severus," she said, "I... I think we should end this now. Minerva is waiting for us."

"Waiting?" he asked incredulously. "You came here to fetch me?"

"Well, that sounds a bit harsh. It's not as if I'm fetching a dog. I don't have a Bonio or anything."

"No, you are fetching me. The canine treat is you. Is it not, Miss Granger?"

"Of all the idiotic and insensitive things you have ever said, this one wins the prize, Severus Snape! You dare to suggest I would use my body as a prize for the mere task of bringing, no *fetching*, you to Minerva? You must think me low. Even the most desperate prostitute in Knockturn Alley asks a fee for service!"

"Are you saying that the price is a bit steeper? Have you given it much thought? Depending on your asking price, I might place a bid," Severus remarked, quite pleased with himself for successfully goading her.

Severus was impressed to say the least. He had provoked her, and here she sat, breathing heavily and with purpose in her attempt to calm herself, and it was working. She actually began to look pleased with herself, leaving him confused, as he was obviously the victor in this verbal battle of wits.

"Severus, thank you for a stimulating sparring match. I look forward to an eventful evening in your company." Hermione's eyes shone with humor and something else, something Severus couldn't quite place. She was almost showing a sense of triumph. Surely she could not be so dense as to think she'd won this round?

"Gryffindors... for all of your bravado, you certainly cower quickly, Miss Granger."

"Severus, for a Slytherin, you're so transparent. If I were you, I'd rethink my plan."

"Plan... what plan is this I should rethink?"

"Oh, come now, everyone knows a Slytherin doesn't *do anything* without a plan, and if I were you, I'd consider another strategy because the one where you try to incite me just won't work anymore."

"Why, Miss Granger, it's just like a Gryffindor to give your opponent leverage. Thank you for the insight."

"I hope the day comes where you no longer consider me the opponent. I think I would like that very much," Hermione said as she searched his eyes for some recognition and acceptance. "Don't you agree?"

Severus was again taken aback by her apparent sincerity and found himself eager for her comfort. "Yes, I do agree." He reached out to Hermione and led her toward the door.

"Where are we going?"

"Well, you did come here to fetch me, so consider me fetched," Severus conceded with a gleam in his eyes that was as unfamiliar to her as it was to him.

"You are such a complicated man, Professor Severus Snape."

"Indeed, Doctor Granger, and that is possibly the understatement of the year." Severus placed her hand in the crook of his arm and asked, "Shall we?" Hermione's consent was answered by her lovely smile. They left his chambers in a mutually contented reverie.

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"I don't think this is a good idea, Minerva," Remus said as he stood in the girls' first floor lavatory, staring at the open chasm that was the entrance to the fabled Chamber of Secrets. "This is still a part of Hogwarts, and I have no wish to put the students in danger."

"I understand and appreciate your concern, Remus. But as we've already said, once you're in the Chamber, the only way out is through Portkey. The only threat is to Severus and Hermione, as they will be with you." She gave him a motherly pat on the arm. "This cavern held a Basilisk for over a thousand years, I'm sure it can manage to house a wee wolf for a few hours. We will be safe, Remus. Severus' potion will work. You'll be sleeping like a pup for the entire evening."

"And if you should get out, it would be *my pleasure* to cast a full Body-Bind on you," Severus said. "That may be inevitable, as I will need to get close enough to feed you your dosage, and I certainly don't need you biting my arm off."

Remus laughed nervously and Hermione said, "Don't worry, love." Through her peripheral vision, Hermione noticed Severus' head snap toward her when she called Remus *love*. 'This is going to be fun,' she thought. "We will not fail you, and you will not harm anyone."

"Listen up," Minerva commanded, clapping her hands together for attention. "Before you go down we need to set the Portkeys. Severus and I have received permission from the Portkey Office at the Ministry to create three. One to your designation in Colombia and another for the return directly into the Chamber. Severus, you must reset the Portkeys for each and every trip. Then, the other is to be used only for your return to the school. It will take you to precisely this spot. To provide additional privacy and security, I will close off this lavatory to the students. And finally, I have spoken to Dobby, and he will be my liaison for what is happening down in the Chamber. I have asked him to check-in every hour, on the hour. Any questions?"

With all three shaking their heads like schoolchildren, Minerva proceeded to set the three Portkeys, showing everyone which Portkey held which predetermined destination. For easy use in handling, Minerva chose a broken pocket watch for their transport to Colombia, a small obsidian rock to return to the Chamber, and a goblet, glittering with gemstones, that was large enough for three individuals to hold for their return trip into the school.

"Severus, a word with you if you please?"

"Yes, Headmistress?"

"If you are unable to control Remus, he'll be trapped in the Chamber without the Portkey. Remus will not be himself for the night, but he will not be able to harm anyone." Earnestly, she looked into his eyes. "You and Hermione must protect yourselves and use the Portkey to return to the school if things get... out of hand. Do you understand?"

Silently, he nodded.

"It is your responsibility, Severus, to protect Hermione." Her statement left no room for argument, despite his itching to do so, and the time was not right to do so. Even he knew his boundaries.

"Wait, wait, wait!" Remus yelled. "I can't go through with this, not here! The Basilisk was able to get into the school and harm the children in the year before I became a professor. If it could gain access then so could I, if I were not contained."

"Remus, calm yourself," Severus replied. "After the Basilisk was destroyed, Dumbledore and I, with the assistance of the other teachers," he added, looking at Minerva, "searched for all possible entrances and exits and we sealed them all. The pipes no longer access any part of the school. The only way out is by Portkey. Not even a Parselmouth can gain access any longer."

"Then how was this entrance opened?" Hermione asked.

"That remains a well-guarded secret known only to the Headmistress and her Deputy," Severus replied loftily.

Minerva cleared her throat. "While I haven't ventured down there for many a year, we've tried to make the way down a little easier on the backside. You should each cast a Cushioning Charm to ease your descent and landing. Severus," she continued, "do you have everything you need?"

"Yes, I have charmed my equipment and supplies to fit in my pocket. I have the Portkeys you've created and I have the werewolf."

"Severus!" Hermione and Minerva exclaimed in unison.

"I can't believe that I am the only one with his humor intact."

"Don't look at me," Remus responded in a quivering tone. "My nerves are frayed. I don't think I could identify a joke at the moment, let alone enjoy one."

"Well, Severus, if that was your idea of humor, then this is going to be one very long night," Hermione said under her breath, hoping not to have to experience any more of his brand of humor.

"It will indeed," Minerva agreed, then went to hug each of them. "Please be safe and return to us unscathed."

With Severus leading the way, they each jumped into the Chamber's foreboding entrance, casting their cushioning charms with the hope of easing their landing.

As Minerva closed the Chamber entrance, she said a plea to the brains behind this plan. "Albus, I hope you know what you're doing." And with that, she magically sealed the doorway to the lavatory.

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"May I?"

Lost in thought, Hermione distantly heard Severus' question and responded reflexively, "May I what?"

After entering the Chamber, Severus had taken on his dark, brooding and mysteriously erotic Professor Snape persona, issuing orders to both her and Remus. Hermione was certain that he was not aware of the effect this particular side of his personality had on her. He probably thought it instilled terror and dread in her, expecting automatic compliance. It did elicit an automatic response from her, but the kind that comes from excess estrogen instead of a fragile nervous system. Snape's display translated into an impenetrable strength and power for Hermione. Focusing on his dark eroticism, she noticed her body's physical response to this, yet again, and she realized she needed a dark corner to hide the increasingly necessary task of using a cleansing charm on her underwear. This was, after all, the Chamber of Secrets, and there had to be a dark corner somewhere.

Pulling her mind out of the dense fog it had drifted into, Hermione realized that she had missed something Severus had said, and if she didn't pay attention, knowing Severus, she would end up offering up her soul to use for some asinine Dark magic, or something just as unpleasant. "I'm sorry, Severus, what did you say?"

"I asked if I may rub that for you."

"What are you talking about?"

"Your *derrière*, your backside, your..." he leant closer and whispered into her ear, "... rather exceptional buttocks. You've been rubbing them ever since we got down here."

Hermione spotted Severus' air of superiority, apparently he was feeling pleased with himself. She was torn between wanting to flog him for being so smug and wanting to tackle him onto the flagstones, beg him to take her on the cold Chamber floor. "Oh that, well, I landed much harder than anticipated," she responded, imagining Severus slowly rubbing her bum in ever increasing circles, applying a little more pressure, squeezing, teasing.... "But, um... Severus?"

"Yes?"

"Maybe later," she replied, thinking that she definitely was in need of a dark and quiet corner.

A voice from the shadows asked, "Why don't you just put me out of my misery now instead of planting that image in my head?"

"Remus, do not be concerned," Severus was quick to respond, even as Hermione processed the meaning of her friend's words. "I shall ensure that you are completely unaware of any activity Hermione and I happen to engage in."

"Boys, let's stop this banter before it gets out of control."

"Harry and Ron *are* boys... we are men," Severus pointed out with swift repartee.

"Oh, yes, of course, how stupid of me. You *must* forgive me. I was just confused by your infantile behavior."

Hermione was pleasantly taken aback when both men, in a surprising display of solidarity, turned toward one another and, in unison, shrugged in response. If nothing else, tonight definitely held some surprises. "Actually, I rather like the idea of being down here, alone... with both of my men." A smirk proudly displayed across her face.

"Yes, well, one of *your* men will be unconscious for most of the evening... if this works, that is."

Remus stepped out of the shadows. His face, lined and gray in the candlelight, showed he was worried despite his brave attempt at banter. "What a nice way to instill confidence, old man. I think I'd rather be left in the dark regarding the potential efficacy of your treatment as well as any nefarious entanglements you two find yourselves in."

"Oh, Remus, don't worry. Please, don't pay attention to Severus, we're going to do everything we can to make sure you don't have any idea what is going on."

"Indeed," Severus agreed, trying to instill peace and confidence into his old friend.

"What is that supposed to mean?" Remus growled, literally, allowing Hermione and Severus an opportunity to reflect on the real reason they were in the Chamber. Remus was only hours away from transformation, from becoming the beast, mentally and physically.

"Remus, it means that I am confident in my calculations, that this preparation will be effective in calming the beast." Severus turned back to the preparation table. "Oh, and Remus? Don't call me *old man* again."

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Hermione assisted Severus in setting up the make-shift potions lab on the left side of the main cavern. While she completing her tasks under the menacing eyes of Salazar's formidable ornamental snakes, Severus created an effective confinement area in the Chamber's corridor.

"Severus, I don't know about this," Remus said as he paced the main Chamber, his hands stuffed into his pockets and his back hunched in a fruitless effort to keep his agitation under control. "Keeping me in the entryway to the Chamber just doesn't seem safe to me."

"Would you rather I kept you locked in a cell so you could sleep and defecate in safe proximity?"

"Well, now that you put it so eloquently, I think I much prefer it your way." A nervous laugh escaped Remus as he responded to Severus' dark humor. Hermione was becoming worried that they were taking too long to prepare. Remus would only become more agitated until eventually the inevitable change would occur.

"Remus," Severus interjected, "as Minerva indicated, there is absolutely no access to the school above from these Chambers. After it was rediscovered we sealed off all access points with stone, mortar, and magical wards. It is impossible to escape, which is why we have Portkeys for our exits. And now, if you don't mind, Remus, Hermione and I have more work to do and we will need time in which to do it.

"Hermione please join me so that I can give you the last of the instructions."

Severus gave Hermione the pocket watch Portkey and the obsidian rock that would return her to the Chamber. Severus provided precise instructions. The pocket watch was set to activate with a simple charm to take her directly to the Portkey Office of the Latin American Magical government headquarters. Once there, she was to have her identity verified, then she would be transported by a Ministry personnel to the remote location where the narcotic could be freshly harvested. Then, she would use the obsidian stone Portkey to immediately return to the Chamber, leaving the Ministry personnel to Apparate back to his or her office on their own. With her instructions given, Hermione held onto her Portkey, whispered the activation charm, and was whisked away on her Latin American adventure.

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"Hermione, far be it from me to intrude on what seems to be a very private and cryptic affair, but I was not a spy for the fortune and fame alone. Since your return from Colombia you've been brooding when you should've been assisting me."

"Assisting you? Severus, your task here is the easy one! I've had the difficult job of tramping through the Amazon basin, looking for these little green leaves hidden amongst a billion other little green leaves."

"Yes, I see how that must have been difficult for you, what with a Ministry guide leading you to the exact spot they cultivate for harvesting, pointing individually at these elusive green leaves with a very pointed stick."

"You make it sound easy, but being in the jungle with its heat and humidity has done nothing for my hair, and let's not even mention the damned mosquitoes!"

"Hermione, forgive me for coming in-between you and your vanity, but if you will, I would appreciate your assistance here. I've just added the tea I created by steeping the leaves you harvested. It should be consumed as hot as Remus can take it, so please fetch him so we can begin."

"I prefer to *bring* him, rather than to *fetch* him."

"Which ever, although mine was more apropos."

Remus ambled up behind them. "Not to worry, I've fetched myself."

"Very well. We still have some time before your transformation and it would, of course, be easier to consume this potion whilst you are still in human form. I suggest you remove your clothing and drink the draught. It should immediately put you into a deep sleep, where, I hope, you won't experience the pain associated with your transformation."

"Will I become unconscious immediately upon consumption?" Remus asked.

"I'm not certain. Although it won't take long to find out, not with the intensity of the mixture that I've brewed."

"Forgive me, but I would prefer to remain in solitude while I transform. I've investigated the pipes meandering through here and I'd like to transform just on the other side of that entryway, there." Remus pointed toward his intended secluded area at the far end of the confinement area.

"Remus, I respect your need for privacy, but if you would please choose another spot, one that is closer. It is important for me to have you within visual range so that I can observe your movements. If at any moment I notice you stirring, I would like to take that opportunity to deliver another dosage of the potion, so that you can remain asleep throughout the night."

"I understand. And Severus, I just wanted you to know that I really do appreciate all of the additional effort you are putting into this, to ease the transformation for me."

"As I've already indicated, it was my carelessness that caused this situation, and it is my responsibility to rectify it as best I know how. This is what I came up with. I only hope that it works, for your sake and ours."

Hermione stopped what she was doing and turned to look over her shoulder at her former professor. He looked more worried than she had ever seen him before. *Will* work, Remus. This narcotic is strong stuff! I will continue to get more from Colombia, mosquitoes be damned, and Severus will make more of the draught. You will be fine. Before we all know it, morning will come, and you will return to your human form. I've even taken the liberty of bringing a robe for when you do."

Remus walked up to Hermione and gently cupped her face. Without words, he looked into her eyes, enjoying the varying shades of brown he encountered. He bent his head to meet her lips and gently kissed her. As he pulled away, he whispered, "My life is dictated by the moon and that will never change. Do you understand what I'm saying? Be kind to yourself and enjoy your life. Be happy... for me." As Remus straightened, Hermione was about to respond to his words, but was stopped by soft fingers against her lips, sending a clear message that her response was not needed. Embracing a false, yet needed bravado, if he was to make it through the night with his dignity intact, he moved away from Hermione, toward Severus, who had his back to the pair as he dispensed the draught into a goblet. Sensing Remus' presence, and the delicateness of the situation, Severus turned and handed Remus his cup without saying a word. As Remus grabbed the cup he nodded his thanks and moved away toward the area which would afford him a bit of privacy for his transformation.

"Hermione," Severus whispered. "It would be wise if you obtained another cutting, so that if what I have given Remus does not work, I can provide him with another dosage."

The moment of truth had arrived, and Hermione was as determined as Severus to help Remus keep his monster at bay. "I'll be back in fifteen minutes." She grabbed the pocket watch and was pulled into the Portkey toward her destination.

Severus remained alone despite Remus' presence. Keeping himself busy, he ensured the temporary laboratory was cleaned and the base mixture was ready for its next infusion. All items were ready for use and within reach. With nothing else to do, he walked away from the lab, toward the right side of the main chamber, to a spot where he could see Remus sitting just inside the entrance to the castle's piping system. Both men, although separate, shared the fate of those waiting for their roles to be played out. Severus imitated Remus' position on the floor and realized the hardness of his perch. Casting a Cushioning Charm, Severus resumed his seat on a much more tolerable flagged floor.

As Severus relaxed for the first time in hours, he noticed Hermione's return. She looked disheveled and confused as she looked quickly around the Chamber, clearly searching for any sign of himself or Remus. She had not spotted him, and Severus took advantage of this opportunity to observe her. While she expertly crushed the leaves in the mortar, followed by steeping them, he noticed that her hair was scruffy, her face was sweaty, and she had red marks on her exposed skin. He astonished himself, as he knew what he saw was beautiful to him. Even as she scratched at her skin, making the red marks more pronounced, he knew that he wanted to have her. He wanted her, but he would have to think of something to tell her about the night he almost lost himself to the beast. He felt the welcome stirrings of his loins and decided that thinking was highly overrated.

Placing his fears aside, Severus stood up and walked towards her. "Before you were rubbing, now you are scratching," he gently purred into her ear.

"Huh?" Hermione was instantly aroused by his proximity, the vibration of his voice and the heat of his breath following the curvature of her ear, sending shivers down her spine. "Oh, yes, well. I hadn't noticed I was scratching." Her response was a bit breathier than she had anticipated. Her mind went on holiday as her body took control.

Severus moved closer, emboldened by IT's response. He pressed his erection against her back as he continued to murmur into her ear. "What, pray tell, has you scratching your skin raw, Hermione?"

"Mosquitoes," Hermione answered, as seductively as she could. "There are a lot of mosquitoes in the jungle." Reacting more to her hormonal instincts than any brain-power she could muster she leaned back into his erection. She closed her eyes and welcomed the firm feel of him.

"Hermione, do you know what is considered the best medicine to treat mosquito bites, reducing their swelling, and the itching that is inherent with their toxin?"

"No," she replied, unable to utter anything more complex or intelligent.

"Saliva."

"Saliva?"

"For a know-it-all, you seem to have forgotten-it-all."



Hermione's knees felt weak. She continued to lean against him, enjoying the feel of his hard body behind her. She didn't care if he called her a hippogriff at that moment. His dry wit was more tolerable when combined with a dry hump.

"How am I supposed to apply saliva to all of them? They're everywhere." Hermione expected that her question would have her usual spirit behind it, but it only held a whimper.

"If you beg nicely, I might help you," he purred, turning her around to face him. "Shall I kiss them, make them better?"

"Unhuh," she replied as best she could. Severus hadn't waited for her reply, he'd begun to suck on her lips. Whatever her verbal reply turned out to be didn't matter at this point, as she grabbed him by the back of the neck to pull him down, opening her mouth to him.

Hermione was lost in the sensations Severus was creating. He leaned her back, reached around her, and in one swift movement delivered the promised caress to her arse, parting her thighs. She was open to him, and he took full advantage, pressing his hardness against her center. Time and place were forgotten. Hermione was only aware of the heat of her desire, the wetness of her core, and the hardness of Severus' erection. Tilting her head back, she let out a soft moan of pleasure. Encouraged, Severus pressed his body even closer and reclaimed her lips in a fervent, demanding kiss. Her fingers entwined into his hair, her only anchor as she relinquished, let go, submitted to his being in complete control. She relished the unexpected eroticism of their tongue's light touching and the contrast of his firm hand possessively grasping her breast. In the distance, she could hear Severus' purrs change from sultry to a low growl with just a hint of danger. 'Yes,' Hermione thought, 'this is what I want.'

Severus pulled away slightly and asked, "Are you growling?"

"I thought you were."

Reality seemed to dawn on the pair. Severus turned to look behind him, but was violently thrown across the Chamber, his body slammed against the far wall. His stomach gripped with fear as he heard Hermione scream. Opening his eyes, willing his body to stand upright despite the pain, he saw a naked Remus, still in human form, coming toward him in a predatory manner.

"Leave my woman alone!" Remus roared, in an eerie combination of a human rumble and an animalistic growl, declaring his descent into the madness of a werewolf.

"Remus, stop!" Hermione yelled from behind him. As Remus turned toward her, Severus took the opportunity and reached for his wand. He was ready to cast a Binding Charm, but it was no longer necessary. Remus doubled over and began morphing into the wolf.

"Hermione, hurry, extract the leaves from the liquid," Severus yelled as he limped back toward the laboratory table. Hermione did what she was told, efficiently and without question. Remus continued to transform, just feet away. Quickly, Severus added the infused tea to the base potion, stirred, and poured it into the goblet. As he turned around, Remus the wolf was transformed and preparing to attack him. With one swift wand movement, Severus bound the wolf with a Binding Charm and carefully tipped the potion into the werewolf's open mouth.

With the wolf bound, it was difficult to know if the potion had any effect. "Hermione, get the goblet Portkey ready. I'm not certain this will work." Severus levitated the wolf to a safer distance, toward the original opening of the Chamber, approximately seventy-five feet away. Removing the Levitation and Binding Charms, Severus set the wards and stood beside Hermione, awaiting the wolf's reaction.

When none came, they turned toward each other and embraced. Hermione cried into Severus' chest, letting go of all the stress and fear of the moment. In this, her moment of weakness, Hermione was certain Severus would allow her her tears, as he held onto her as tightly as she held onto him. And in his embrace, she thought back to Remus and his possessive statement to leave his woman alone. Her shoulders started to rumble, not from weeping or from fear, but from a pure sense of liberation and giddiness.

"Are you okay, Hermione?" Severus asked, concerned that her weeping had become amplified.

Hermione held onto Severus by his waist as she lifted her head to look up at him, exposing her face and all its contradiction. Tears fell from her eyes, but her mouth was held taut in a surprisingly hearty laugh. "Yes, Severus, I'm fine. It's just that I've always wanted to be desired and needed. I can't believe that in that one statement, Remus gave me what I've wanted to hear for ages."

"Is that what you want, Hermione, to be ravished by an animal?"

"No... no of course not, but well... yes, but not with all of that scary stuff that came along with his particular declaration."

"Apparently, Remus is rather possessive of you," Severus commented as he tested the wards to ensure their safety.

"It's just as a result of his transformation and his increased agitation prior to his change. You know Remus, he's quite the gentleman, and just moments before, he urged me to forget him and be happy."

"So, you and Remus were not involved?"

"No, we never have been, though we have feelings for one another."

"You've never been intimate?" he asked, truly unable to comprehend having feelings for someone and not acting upon them.

"No, Severus, why do you ask?"

"Well, I just assumed that if you and he both *have feelings* for the other that intimacy would follow."

"I need time to sow my oats, to do what I want to do, and if in the future we still share these feelings then we can be free to explore them further. For now, it's clear that I am not ready for a commitment of that sort."

"Just what are you ready for, Hermione?"

"For everything life has to offer."

Still embracing each other, Severus tightened his hold and again took possession of her mouth. He demanded entrance, and she acquiesced. If Hermione wanted to be dominated and possessed, he would be the one to claim her. It seemed to be a perfect marriage of personalities.

"Umm, that's nice," Hermione mewed, her every fiber tingling with pleasure. "You know, Severus, it has just occurred to me that we should continue with our sessions, considering how many non-refundable Galleons you have already paid me. Why don't we do something different, considering the unusual circumstances of our arrangement? I suggest we conduct an examination of sorts, and depending on the results, we may need to engage in practical sessions to help move you along. What do you say?"

To Be Continued...

A/N: Special thanks go out to the magnificent Wartcap for the brilliant beta job! All hail, Wartcap! I'm honored to have Wartcap beta this story. I'm a fan of hers and feel like I'm in the presence of a celebrity. If you haven't read her stories, you are greatly missing out.

Thanks also go out to Tinnidawg and SiriusWoman for the once over, and to Becky for the amazing *Sex Therapy in the Dungeon* avatars she's created!

# Confessions

Chapter 13 of 15

Severus experiences Erectile Dysfunction. Hermione is a Sex Therapist. Will she be able to cure him?

Summary: Severus experiences Erectile Dysfunction. Hermione is a Sex Therapist. Will she be able to cure him?

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## CHAPTER THIRTEEN: Confessions

Severus found himself in a bit of a quandary. After Hermione's candid proposition, the moment of truth had come. He had two choices to make. Either continue his ruse and engage in more *sessions* with Hermione under the guise of taking them on behalf of Remus... or confess.

He had tried to ignore making this decision on his own. Instead he found himself taking advantage of the situation, and of her. Despite the longing in his loins and an unfamiliar desire to hold her, to be near her, he knew when to change tactical maneuvers. Even a Slytherin knew that there were moments for the games to end and for truth to prevail.

"Severus?" Hermione inquired, puzzled by his lack of response.

"Hermione, I did not intend to ignore you. You've just given me rather a lot to consider." Severus lowered his face so that it was level with hers. "I would love nothing more than to discuss *practical sessions* with you, but for now why don't you obtain some more leaves so that we can talk without any further *beastly* interruptions if it should become necessary to medicate Remus again."

"Severus," Hermione warned, "play nice."

"My apologies, Hermione. Upon your return I would like an opportunity to talk with you."

"Always the mysterious one, aren't you?"

"Mysterious? Well, a spy should never be expected to change his colors."

"No, I but I can expect a Slytherin to shed his skin every so often."

"Then, upon your return, I shall meet your expectation."

"Severus Snape, you really are dark and mysterious! Now you have me very much intrigued, so I'll be back in a jiffy!" With that statement Hermione turned around, searched for the pocket watch, and within an instant she was transported out of the Chamber to Colombia.

Lost in thought, Severus stared at the spot Hermione had vacated. His Slytherin tactics had failed him. Not because they were unsound, but because for a hateful moment he'd faltered and allowed the beast to return, upsetting his entire game plan. This started out as a simple ploy on his part to maintain his secrets, but he never imagined that this woman, a Gryffindor no less, would be a match for him. Regardless, it was time for a ceasefire. He created this hole he was in, and it was time to set it all right again.

It was Albus, thankfully, who had returned him his dignity. He helped him to realize that despite his descent, the beast did not overtake him. Had it, he would have forced himself on Hermione, and he had not. Though, with his use of *Obliviate* on her, his violation of her was that of a different, albeit intimate, sort.

The time for a ceasefire was long overdue. While he would introduce the possibility of a truce to Hermione, she may not forgive him. She might be repulsed at what he had done, and rightfully so. Despite her not having any memory of the incident, he would ensure that she regained the events of that day.

As Severus mulled over his inescapable confession, he walked around the Chamber and looked in on Remus. He was doing well, despite being in werewolf form, deep in sleep. Considering the initial double dosage required for that deep sleep to occur, Severus believed that it would be some time before another dosage was necessary. Although, one could never be too careful or too confident, as Remus had already proven himself to be full of surprises.

Severus looked around the cavernous Chamber. From his position he could see the vast antechamber flanked with Salazar's snake-entwined pillars. He could see the sleeping werewolf just in front of inoperable entrance doors. He turned his gaze toward his immediate surroundings, from the makeshift potions lab to the plinth of Salazar's statue; cold and void. What else should he have expected from the Chamber of Secrets, hanging tapestries and an Axminster carpet?

In light of the intimate and potentially disturbing conversation that he planned, the atmosphere certainly didn't lend itself to a sense of warmth and security. Though, thankfully, as the Chamber of *Secrets*, it did provide complete privacy. Severus was unsure as to how to proceed, but it was clear that he had to improve upon the Chamber's décor if he was to make Hermione comfortable. Looking around the chamber, there was nothing of substantial size and dimension from which to Transfigure to make the place comfortable. He would have to improvise. Time and lycanthrope wait for no man. With Hermione due back at any moment and Remus to observe, simple Cushioning Charms would have to suffice.

And, with a grumble in his stomach, a thought came to him.... "Dobby, you are summoned." As soon as Severus said the words, Dobby appeared with the resonating crack typical of elf magic.

"Dobby is here, sir." The little creature sheepishly said as his eyes darted to and fro, searching for the werewolf.

"We are all safe, Dobby, at the moment. Please share with Professor McGonagall that all is going well."

"Yes, sir. Dobby is a doing good, sir. I've already sent word to Professor that you and Dr Granger is getting along."

"Already sent word?"

"Yes, sir. Headmistress has asked that Dobby look in every hour, and I is doing that, sir."

"And just when did you check in on us before?"

"You were eating something on Dr Granger's face, sir. I was scared and was going to help her, but I think she was happy to share. Is she okay, sir?" Dobby continued as his eyes rolled around his tiny head, scanning the Chamber for her.

"Dobby, do not concern yourself with that. Dr Granger is well and is currently obtaining another cutting."

"I think Headmistress would prefer for Dobby to remain to see to Dr Granger's health, sir."

"Nonsense. Dobby, you are needed on another matter. Dr Granger and I require tea, biscuits, and sandwiches."

"Yes, sir. Dobby is helping you, sir."

"Thank you."

"Yes, sir!" Dobby eagerly replied and Vanished with a snap.

As is typical for efficient house-elf, Dobby returned within moments with a tray full of food and tableware... a lot of tableware.

"Dobby, only Dr Granger and I have requested nourishment. How many people do you think we are entertaining down here in the Chamber of Secrets?" Severus continued, "Considering the number of plates you've brought us, you expect us to feed an entire Quidditch team."

When Dobby did not immediately respond, Severus demanded, "Answer me, Dobby. Why have you brought us so many dishes?"

"Dobby is a very smart house elf, sir. I's bringing you dishes so you don't have to eat food from Dr Granger's face, sir."

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Despite it being mere moments before Hermione's anticipated return from Colombia, Severus continued to question his decision to reveal all to her. He was unbalanced and, despite committing himself to the task, he needed to convince himself why he should go through with confession. He was his only source of strength right now. Albus was safely locked away in the Headmistress' drawer. He was sure of it, considering how upset Minerva had been with Albus last night.

What would confession bring? How would confessing be better than continuing this game? He was getting soft there seemed to be no other explanation for his emotional state. He was anxious and unsure of himself. This was not the Severus Snape he cultivated. Never before had anyone, not even the Dark Lord, caused him to question himself. Yet here he was, thinking and rethinking, figuratively flagellating himself over his decision, behaving like the cook's apprentice on pancake night a right tosser.

There seemed to be no reason to maintain this façade anymore. Hermione had already guessed he was her *real* patient during her enraged diatribe just before he lost control. If she knew, really knew, then why would she endure his presence? In fact, she volunteered to assist him this evening and was even receptive to his attentions. She continued to confuse him. Severus guessed that maybe strategic confusion was her tactical maneuver! Confuse and destroy! Only a Gryffindor would choose such a perplexing strategy. He continued to consider this as he reconsidered the considerable consequences of her non-consideration this made his head hurt. He leaned back against the wall and sighed with defeat. She was beautiful. It wasn't so much her physical beauty that attracted him but her confidence and her intellect. Luckily, she was human too an advantage in a world of Red Caps and Hinkypunks. For all of her attempts to present herself as a composed young woman, Severus could see the fire underneath the surface, luring him into the swamp gas, the quagmire of a relationship. Oh yes, she possessed the fire of a Hinkypunk all right! It was that very fire, and her fallibility, that he found most alluring, endearing and attractive.

As Severus pondered his attraction to Hermione Granger, she reappeared, staggering to retain her footing from her latest Portkey experience. Hermione noticed him in the distance as she smiled and gave a small wave of acknowledgment. Severus stared as he approached her. Her hair no longer remotely resembled tresses or curls, but was more like a frizzy nest of twigs trampled by its avian creator. Her skin was no longer soft and supple but instead she was sporting red splotches swollen by the creature's poison. And yet, she was beautiful. She looked so young and delicate. Amazing really, considering the roaring fire that burned within the woman. Despite her desire for unrestrained passion and dominance, she could only play that role because in her daily existence she was fire. She was a force to be reckoned with, and Severus Snape would have it no other way.

"Welcome back, Hermione. How did you fare, this time?"

"Look at me! How do you think I fared? Of all the idiotic questions, Severus Snape!" Her words were harsh, but her demeanor bespoke gentle humor as she tilted her head and smiled with her hands on her hips. "Argh, I could never live there," Hermione added then paused for greater effect, "The heat... the humidity... the trees... the mosquitoes!" Hands thrown in the air completed her tirade as she smelled the food and let her nose guide her to the blanket on the flagstone underneath Salazar's formidable statue where food was laid before her.

"I'll be content with a high dose Malarial prophylactic panini," she muttered as she approached the spread. Severus had already taken the cuttings from her and placed them on the workstation using a stasis spell on the chance it would help keep them a bit longer, despite all the research to the contrary.

"Why are you dressed?" Hermione asked as she cast a Cushioning Charm and sat down onto the floor to eat.

"What kind of question is that? Explain your meaning," he snapped.

"Before I departed for Colombia we talked about you shedding your skin." She winked and continued, "I just assumed I'd return to a Severus Snape sporting his birthday suit."

"Ah, clever, dear. Always with your mind in the gutter."

"Don't you mean the dungeon?"

"Don't you wish, my dear?"

"I do," she cooly responded.

Severus took the tender moment to wipe some grime from her face and lingered more than necessary, showing his affection for her. "Hermione, at the moment I believe it is necessary to discuss these sessions of ours. If you don't mind?"

She responded with a cheeky smile that touched his heart. "We agreed, Severus, that they're non-refundable."

"Yes, yes, I know. This has nothing to do with the Galleons." Trying to maintain composed, he pulled his hand from her face and turned his back on her. "Just give me a moment please, I'll explain."

As Severus walked away he vigorously rubbed his face and threaded his hands through his hair, contemplating how to begin this very delicate conversation. There was only one way... to jump right in and ride the tsunami that would assuredly rebound on him.

He turned around facing her and, noticing their height differential, he returned to his seated place across from her. "Hermione, I have not been truthful with you," Severus offered as he reached out to caress her hands in his. "You see, I've lied to you. I told you that Remus was the one experiencing sexual problems, when in actuality it was I who required your services."

Hermione's typically expressive features changed from lighthearted to sober as she absorbed the information presented to her.

"Hermione, it is difficult for me to share this with anyone, and I would understand if you were outraged. I don't know if you are aware, but I'm not normally a very expressive man, and it was difficult to share that with which I was uncomfortable accepting myself.

"I've deceived you. You deserve to know the truth. I found myself in a precarious situation on All Hallows' Eve. You had taken to my advances, but I was not in a position to reciprocate."

"Because of your commitment to your witch?" Hermione asked, wringing her hands.

"No... because of my inability to pleasure you." Upon this sensitive revelation, Severus searched Hermione's eyes for acceptance, wanting to know if she would reject him because of his condition, his confession, or his actions. When no negative response came, he continued, "Hermione, there is no other witch."

"No *other* witch?"

"None *other* than you, Hermione."

She turned their hands so that she was holding onto him as he had done with her. This gentle action passed conversational control to Hermione, and he graciously relinquished. "Severus... I'm a bit at a loss for words at the moment, although there are many things that I want to say."

Severus' brow furrowed in concern. Her opening statement seemed to be preparing him for her next words, which would be comforting, designed to let him down easily.

Hermione hesitantly continued, her eyes trained on their entwined fingers instead of his eyes. "I'm grateful to you, first of all for respecting me enough to share this with me. I know it was not easy. You are such a private man... such a deeply private man."

Hermione lifted her head and met his eyes. "I feel privileged to have your confidence...."

"Witch!" Severus yelled. Spittle escaped his mouth as his anger flared. "I don't want you to play *therapist* with me! Speak to me! Yell at me! Walk away... do *something*, but don't be reasonable!"

"Severus, I said I had *many* things to say. If you wish to play tyrant, I will not continue, and I believe this conversation to be very important for both of us. Therefore, I would like to continue, but only if you calm yourself."

"You're *therapizing* me."

"Yes I am, and with good reason. Your reaction speaks loudly, leaving me to believe that there are other things you wish to share. But before you do, I will continue with what I was going to say.

"Severus Snape. I do feel privileged that you are opening up to me. I recognize that it is not an easy thing for you to do with me... or with anyone else I'd wager. Truth to tell, I had guessed that you were my intended patient, although that didn't come to me until some time had passed, and after a lot of investigation. Even though I'd presumed this to be the case, I still pursued you.

"I do want you, Severus Snape." Hermione's declaration was clear and concise. She wanted to leave no ground for uncertainty.

"Hermione, I knew you had presumed I was the patient."

"What do you mean? We never discussed it." Though she questioned him, recognition began to dawn on her as to the memories removed from her.

"Yes, we did, in a way.... It was the evening you and I returned to my rooms after our visit with Remus.

"Go on."

"I wanted to have you, but I was a dunderhead. I couldn't think with anything other than my penis and my considerable ego. I'm a force to be reckoned with where those two are concerned, let alone in combination. Whilst you may not have been aware, you and I were in a battle of wills. We were in a grand competition, and while I wanted you, I needed your professional assistance to actually succeed. But as my id was in control, I couldn't allow anyone... especially not you, the beautiful witch I desired, to know of my situation." Severus was deep in thought, and Hermione chose to remain quiet, allowing him time to think and work through the emotions boiling under the surface.

"When you returned to my rooms that night, you confronted me."

"I'm sorry, Severus."

"Do... not... be... sorry," Severus warned with more of an internal hatred than an animosity toward her. "You confronted me because I, being me, had to cement my ruse, and I said cruel things regarding Remus. Naturally, you defended him and confronted me. The situation was not pretty. You are strong willed, and I am a stubborn man. Something in me awoke, something... Dark and ugly. Something I had buried deep down inside and thought that I had eradicated. I thought I that I had outgrown who I once was, but in that moment I lost myself to it."

"To what?"

"To the beast, Hermione... to the beast." Severus was now ready for the tsunami to hit.

"Tell me more of this *beast*, Severus." Hermione's heart was thundering loudly in her chest. She was scared, and in this moment she didn't know what to do or how to react. It seemed logical to respond as only *therapist* Hermione would to do anything else would place her and Severus in another potentially explosive situation. There were not many times she played *therapist* in her personal life, but there came a time in everyone's life where the unknown was scary. And right now, Hermione was terrified.

"The *beast*, Miss Granger...."

"Hermione, I am Hermione! Look at me, Severus!" she cried. "Do *not* refer to me as Miss Granger or Dr Granger or anything other than Hermione. Do not distance yourself from me, not now! I need you to stay with me, Severus. Do not put up any walls between us anymore. We're past that. This beast will not win. I will not allow it to win or to control you." Hermione was now certain her heart would escape the confines of her chest. What was unfolding in front of her was like an event she'd read only in her psychology books and the occasional well scripted thriller movie where the criminal distanced himself from his victim in order to justify his behavior. She would not, and could not, allow that to happen.

Severus bent his head down and laced his fingers through his hair, forcefully grabbing it so much that Hermione was certain that it hurt. Seconds felt like minutes, and when he finally let go, he turned his face toward her. When she saw his eyes, they were blood red and staring at her with such intensity that she was not certain if this was the emerging beast he was referring to. Hermione's internal world began to calm, despite the dangerous external stimuli she was facing. It reminded her of her cool head in the face of real danger. History books record that she was the cool-headed friend of Harry Potter. She didn't know if she should be relieved at her tranquil reaction, as it meant that she was preparing for battle, or if she should be frightened. Her confusion was unsettling.

"Hermione," Severus sobbed, "I'm trying. Please help me to forget about the beast."

"Severus," she said as she reached for him, "I won't help you forget, that is not the answer. But, I will help you heal." Though she was not certain she wanted to know about the beast, she *needed* to know and asked, "Severus, tell me about the beast."

In an attempt to regain some semblance of control, Severus sat up, straightened his posture and smoothed down his robes. He reached for some tea and drank the soothing liquid in an attempt to calm his nerves as he began his tale. "Many years ago, when I worked as a spy for Dumbledore in the Dark Lord's camp, I occasionally transformed into a beast. Not literally as in our friend over there...." Severus pointed a lazy finger toward the sleeping werewolf. "But I was a beast in every other sense of the word. I was merciless, and while I was playing a part, it was still me."

"Hermione, I could not do the things I did while being 'Severus Snape the spy', I had to be 'Severus Snape the beast.' It was what the Dark Lord expected of me, and I did my job well." Severus' voice was low and deeper than usual, though not smooth as his usual tones were. This Darker version seemed laced with gravel and sounded very sinister. "I would transform into the beast during these moments, and it allowed me to succeed where others have failed. In the end I know that I owe the beast my life. But in saving my life, it also took away something precious, something I held dear."

"What, Severus? What did the beast take away?"

"The beast took away... everything good that I was. I became that which I hate most in this world. I was evil and foul. I allowed no one into my life save Albus. I shut out the entire world, and while I'd never win a popularity contest, I purposefully created a world where people would hate me and scorn me. In the end, it was / who paid dearly for it. I've never known love, Hermione. And in this game I began playing with you, I began to feel as if you were a match for my style and my wit. I was actually hopeful that you and I would become involved, to have an opportunity to see if we could develop a relationship. But, it's not meant to be, my dear."

"Why is it not meant to be?"

"Because the beast returned that night, and I almost raped you, Hermione." And with that declaration another evil was laid bare. Severus repeated in a whisper, "I almost raped you."

"Severus, look at me please," Hermione pleaded, attempting to keep him rooted to this reality and not one generated by his self-pity. "I need you to look at me because I want to be clear that you are listening to me and that you understand what I say. I disagree with you," Hermione emphatically stated while searching his eyes for comprehension. "The beast did not return that night. Had it, you would've raped me and while I do not condone rape, I do praise you for stopping and not allowing the beast to return. Let the beast go, Severus. He is part of your past, not your present. And he will not be a part of your future unless you allow him to be. He has not returned and it is only the ghost of the beast that is haunting you, for you are truly 'Severus Snape the man', neither spy nor beast... and it is the *man* that I want."

"I Obliviated those memories from you, Hermione. It was a most despicable, desperate act, but I could not allow you to recall those terrifying memories. For this, I am truly sorry."

"Severus, I need to have my memories returned to me. I do not condone that type of violation against my will. While I understand your reasoning, I need all of my mind intact. Whether for good or for bad, all of my experiences make me the person that I am. And if the memories hurt, then I will heal and become stronger for it. But Severus, an Obliviate does not a beast make."

"I will place the memories in a Pensieve and share them with you. You are a remarkable woman, Hermione."

"Yes, I am!" Hermione jokingly agreed.

"You know, Albus shared similar words of comfort and they fortified me. I was prepared to take on the beast and not let him conquer me. But, in revealing all to you tonight, I realized that the beast will never truly leave me. While I agree that he is part of my past, I cannot seem to leave him there."

"Please don't let the beast go. He needs to remain in the past and never forgotten. Only then can you continue to live and grow strong in the knowledge that you are no longer the beast and no longer controlled by him. Everything you are today and everything you choose to become tomorrow is dependent on the lessons learned during the era of the beast. It is why you almost violated me. Had you, then yes, I would agree that you were the beast. But in not completing the act, you showed that you learned your lessons, you have free will and you made the right choice. Not because your strings were pulled by the Dark Lord or by Albus, but because you made your own choices and ended what had the potential to be a very deep and disturbing venture into the evils of your past. The beast brought about death and destruction. The man you are today brings about healing and life. You are a good man, Severus Snape."

He laughed. "I am, aren't I?"

Hermione hurled herself into his arms and said, "Yes, you are," as she delivered a bear hug. Severus felt as if a heavy burden had been lifted from his shoulders. He was free, truly free, and he would leave the beast where he belonged in his past.

"We should finish the potion and give another dose to Remus."

"Severus, you didn't call him a beast!"

"No, I didn't. The beast is gone and nowhere to be found."

"Ah, no, I was warning to Remus' animalistic qualities."

"Come here, witch. I can show you my animalistic qualities as long as you know that this animal doesn't share very well."

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*"Mmm, Hermione, you taste so good," he said as he sucked on her bottom lip and trailed wet kisses to the nape of her neck. Hermione knew that his kisses were a bit on the soggy side, but she had never felt so aroused. He fondled her breasts through the tight rib-knit of her jumper, and she felt her nipples respond to his touch. It was an intoxicating feeling. His probing tongue possessed her mouth and imitated the sexual act, fucking her mouth as he pushed it in and out. Hermione thought she would gag from the sheer intensity. She thought to concentrate on the other sensations he was creating as he humped her thigh through their clothes. "Let me touch you, love?" he asked. Trapped as she was, she couldn't speak as his tongue returned to her mouth, so she nodded as best she could to give her enthusiastic consent for him to be doing something other than his current activities. He fumbled before sliding his hand under her jumper and touched her breasts in a way she'd never allowed him to do before. He boldly felt his way down her abdomen toward her mound, stopping only to open her trousers and ease his hands inside the warmth under her panties. Hermione felt a flutter of excitement, desperate for his hands to massage her intimately. When he reached her core, his fingers dipped into her heat and before she could adjust her position to help him find her center, he brutally extracted his hand crying out her name, but not in passion as it should've been, but in disgust. "Hermione, what the fuck? You're too wet! Damn it, didn't you wash before I came over?" She was embarrassed and ashamed, although she knew in her heart there was no need for it. What he'd felt was normal, and if he didn't know that, then that showed his inexperience and immaturity. Her wetness was normal after all, wasn't it?*

"Hermione... Hermione, are you okay?"

"Oh, yes, of course, Severus. I am. Why do you ask?"

"I thought we were debating the moist method versus centrifugal force for deflowering scurvy-grass. You became unfocused, distant. Are you sure you're fine with everything that I've shared with you?"

"Absolutely! I must apologize to you. My inattentiveness was as a result of recalling a rather unpleasant memory. It's over now, I'm fine."

Severus didn't push her to explain any further, and for that she was grateful. They continued to work in companionable silence as they each completed their respective tasks. Severus heated the base formula while Hermione prepared the leaves for steeping. Thankfully, the leaves were still fresh as they remained within the window of usefulness. The last thing Hermione wanted to do was leave Severus after they had formed a delicate thread in their relationship. Not to mention that she dreaded going into that heat and humidity again.

"Severus," Hermione began in an attempt to get his attention, "have you done your homework?"

"What are you talking ab... oh, naughty little witch. Yes, I remember. A most delectable homework assignment if not a little unorthodox, even for you, my dear."

"What is that supposed to mean?"

"Only that you take Sex Therapy to a completely different plane of existence."

"Well, Severus," Hermione said as she removed the steeped leaves from the tea they'd created. "Since we're being completely honest with one another tonight, you are not the only one with a confession to make."

Severus mixed the tea with the base potion and though his job was finished, he continued to stir the cauldron, deep in thought. He didn't own the playing field, and while Hermione was concerned he would be angry at her for playing games with him, it was nothing compared to what he'd shared with her. So he either had to take it, or give up playing. After all, if you play with *Incendio*, occasionally, you get burned.

"Earlier you confessed that you were playing a game with me, intent on getting therapy sessions for your benefit, although it was not exactly how you initially presented it. I was also playing a game with you. I wanted you, Severus, but when you mentioned you were in a relationship, I could do nothing but desire you from a distance. Then you enlisted my professional services. It was during that visit with you, when you retained my services for Remus, that I became suspicious. You were acting rather strangely and very un-Severus like. I didn't know what to do or what to think. All I knew was that I desired you so completely that it was all I could do not to bolt out of your rooms. But I also knew that something was amiss. I left your rooms that morning with a battle plan. My mission was to expose your secret and get you into my bed."

"Explain this battle plan," he added tersely.

"I asked Harry and Remus for assistance. Harry and I went out to eat and planned a passionate kiss in public. Harry being who he is was easily recognized, as I knew he would be, and our picture made the *Daily Prophet*," Hermione pointed out, conveniently leaving out the sexual relationship that had been rekindled. "I also made plans with Remus to send him an owl inviting him to dinner the following night."

"Why, Hermione? What did you seek from doing this?"

"I wanted you to desire me as much as I desired you. I tried to arouse your jealousy," she added sheepishly. As she heard herself speak the words, the stupidity of the entire situation shone brightly in her face. She was embarrassed for how immature she reacted to him, but when in the moment she could do nothing else but enjoy the game.

"Severus, that is the reason for the very unconventional therapy session we shared. I was not acting as a therapist, I was acting like a woman. An immature woman admittedly, but as a woman who wanted you desperately. We were knee-deep in a battle of wills, and I was hell-bent on winning. Please believe me, I have never, ever, ever done a therapy session like that before.

"Pity...."

"What?"

"I said, 'pity'. I'd like to see if I could have a repeat performance."

"You're not upset or furious with me?"

"No, Hermione," Severus said with a chuckle escaping the confines of his throat. "I knew you were a spitfire, but I never knew how rambunctious you could actually be especially when you climaxed! I was so stunned that you could so easily bring yourself to orgasm. That is quite a delectable gift you have there." A smirk graced his lips.

"Don't be so quick to judge me, despite what I said and did during that so-called therapy session. I easily exaggerated my own orgasmic releases, and while masturbation is perfectly normal, climaxing has mostly been outside of my reach."

He searched her eyes for amusement or mischief. When he found none he asked her incredulously, "Please explain, Hermione."

"It is called Secondary Female Sexual Dysfunction. I've researched it thoroughly, as you can well imagine. Basically, it is an inability to orgasm after once being able to. Many believe this to be a psychological problem and not physical. The etiology of which is only garnered through many years of psychoanalysis. Other theorists discuss a more practical approach whereby the woman engages self-exploration through masturbation to determine what techniques are more stimulating for her. The end result of this exercise is to bring oneself to orgasm and then teach these sensual pleasure techniques to your lover. Other theorists discuss a woman taking a more aggressive approach and to seek her own pleasure during intercourse with her lover as this...."

"Hermione... please stop all of this psychobabble and tell me about *you* and not about *theorists*!"

"Actually, to say that I have Secondary Female Sexual Dysfunction is probably a bit exaggerated, but there is not as yet any Tertiary Female Sexual Dysfunction. My problem is that orgasms are very difficult for me to reach, though not impossible. I believe that I have a rather high threshold. It is rare for me to orgasm with a partner, and mostly I am dependent on seeking my own release."

"How did this happen?"

"Ah, that's the magical question isn't it, Severus? I've asked myself that same question many times, and while I haven't spent thousands of Galleons on psychoanalysis, I believe I have been able to understand the genesis of my dysfunction." Hermione's eyes glazed over as she recalled her unpleasant memories. "During my seventh year, Ron and I were kissing, and well, we were both very stimulated. I was still a virgin and, while I wasn't ready for penetration, we were both willing and very eager to explore each other. We were kissing and discovering one another while in my dorm, and he touched me intimately. I was so aroused... I had never been touched there before, you know? Well, not by anyone other than me, that is. So, he... he was touching me, and when he reached my center, he pulled back in revulsion."

"Whatever for?"

"He said I was 'too wet', and he claimed that I was..." Hermione paused and turned her head toward Severus in an effort to valiantly complete her tale. "He claimed that I was unclean."

Severus reached out for her and turned her completely toward him so that she was facing him. He gently reached out and tilted her chin upwards so that they were both looking at each other.

"Look at me, Hermione." Severus repeated Hermione's therapist technique that apparently worked well for her as he now thankfully felt free of the beast. "I need you to look at me and understand what I am about to say. I say this with every fiber of my being. Are you ready? Ron Weasley is a stupid fuck up! He was then and he is now! You are supposed to be naturally lubricated when sexually excited. He brought you to that level of excitement, and the stupid fuck couldn't even understand that! I'm sorry, Hermione. I know that I'm not a therapist, and I cannot say anything brilliant in that arena, but you know as well as I do that he was wrong. You are a beautiful and vibrant

woman, and I would consider it an honor to bring you to that level of excitement. You need a man, a mature man who knows how to treasure you, to bring you pleasure instead of seeking his own.

"I want you, Hermione. Would you let me try?" he asked as he caressed her chin and searched her eyes for a response.

"Oh yes, Severus!" Hermione cried and reached up to kiss him.

Holding her, Severus scanned for any evidence of Dobby and, finding the Chamber elf-free, he proceeded to claim her mouth in a passionate kiss.

He pulled away when he felt the tears fall onto his fingers as they graced her face. "Why are you crying?"

"I can't get that son of a bitch out of my mind! I've tried for years, and I *know* he was stupid and immature and just plain wrong, but it hurts, and I can't make the hurt go away!"

"You and I are some pair, aren't we?" He said, acknowledging the absurdity of their situation.

"Yes, we are! I guess we both need therapy."

"Well, you're a therapist, *Dr* Granger." He playfully added the emphasis on her title.

"Oh yeah, like that worked out well!"

To be continued...

A/N: Wet smooches to Warty! She's an amazing beta and an amazing friend.

Male and Female dysfunction is no laughing matter. Sex is a very important part of the human existence, and I mean no disrespect to those who suffer with this and their loved ones. For this chapter I researched the following site. [www.ecureme.com/especial/obgyn/Female\\_Sexual\\_Dysfunction.asp](http://www.ecureme.com/especial/obgyn/Female_Sexual_Dysfunction.asp)

**THANK YOU** for reading and reviewing!

## Bruised Desire

*Chapter 14 of 15*

Severus experiences Erectile Dysfunction. Hermione is a Sex Therapist. Will she be able to cure him?

**Summary: Severus experiences Erectile Dysfunction. Hermione is a Sex Therapist. Will she be able to cure him?**

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### CHAPTER FOURTEEN: Bruised Desire

Severus traced his finger around the gilt-edged pattern of the ornate plate. Remembering Dobby's remark about his 'eating' from Hermione, he smiled at the elf's misconception of their intimate kiss. Impulsively, he opened his robe and removed the vial within, and with a wicked smile he imagined a delightful end to his evening with Hermione. With a furtive glance across the restaurant, he hurriedly replaced the vial and dropped his face to a frown before the maitre d', or worse, the other patrons noticed his smile. He simmered instead in a satisfactory sensation of expectation and excitement with, he thought, no outward emotion showing.

"Is that Severus Snape smiling?" Hermione teased as she sauntered toward her date.

"Woman, for your information, I am simmering. A Snape does not smile," he said, returning her banter. Standing up, he held out a chair for her. As she sat down in the proffered seat, she glanced up at Severus as he pushed her seat in and then took his own... his trademark scowl firmly checked in place. "Hermione, I would have you know that you are five minutes late for our scheduled date. If you were still my student, I would deduct two house points per each minute tardy."

"Ah, Severus, if I was still your student we wouldn't be here in this lovely restaurant... well, at least not together." Hermione glanced around to ensure that no one was close enough to listen before leaning over the dinner table toward Severus, and in response, he did the same. In a low whisper, she added, "Though, if I was still your student and you were as delicious as you are now, I would do anything to serve detention with you."

"I was always delicious. You were just too young to realize the extent of my considerable palatability."

Hermione responded to his uncharacteristic teasing with a huge grin. "I'm afraid that you're right, Severus. Had I been as discerning as I am now, I may have had a rough seventh year traversing the Universe in search of a Death Eater who also was a fugitive from the Order and the Ministry, and for whom I harbored unrequited and improper lustful affections.

"Not exactly the way the Head Girl is expected to conduct herself."

Severus furrowed his brow in concentrated irritation as Hermione's lighthearted statements served only to remind him of the events of that tumultuous year that eventually saw the liberation of the Wizarding world from the madman he was forced to serve. He made a conscious effort to refocus his attentions and to engage in some personal liberation. It was high time he thought of himself and served himself. For too long he was tied to two masters, serving to do their will, and at that moment all he wanted to focus his attentions on was the beauty in front of him and to engage in some pleasurable activities with nothing else in mind. He turned his attentions toward his date, and with manufactured annoyance, his furrow deepened as he considered his response to her witty repartee. Alas, too much pondering only fueled her insatiable need for chattering and he missed his opportunity to respond to her earlier comment on 'lustful affections.'

"Severus, as your friend, I take it as my duty to inform you that *thesimmer* you are so apt to protect resembles that of a festering troll."

"Hermione, for such a gifted witch you remain ever elusive of true brilliance. As an accomplished professor, I am certain that your education is pristine in the area of Potions. But alas, in the area of Care of Magical Creatures, it is certainly lacking; due, in no small part, to the ineptitude of your brainless professor in that area of study." As he paused momentarily to take a breath between statements, Hermione took the millisecond opportunity he unwittingly afforded her to break into the conversation. She was definitely proving herself to be quite the clever conversationalist, albeit insufferable to no end.

"No need to continue rambling, professor. I can assure you that my education in all areas of study is well cemented into my psyche, and if you are attempting to ascertain to which type of troll I was referring, I can assure you that a mountain troll is by far the best portrayal of your unique brand of qualities."

"Now, I know that you're missing vast amounts of knowledge in your education, Dr Granger. A mountain troll is the most unintelligent of all three varieties."

"Yes they are, aren't they?"

As comprehension dawned on the usually perceptive professor, Severus' scowl deepened, and Hermione suddenly felt an urge to grab his face and lovingly lick his furrow away.

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"Ah, Severus, this is such a delightful restaurant. I love the enchanted ceiling. It reminds me of the Great Hall."

Severus was studying Hermione as her face turned upward, toward the ceiling, in awe of its magical beauty. Of all the female patrons in the restaurant, Severus did not see anyone who rivaled her beauty. In truth, he had not scanned every female present, but there was no need when he had beautiful Hermione, with all of her brilliance and all of her flaws, seated in front of him... and most importantly, *with him*. For such a confident man, he was certainly becoming a delightful pile of mush where she was concerned. "Hermione, I know we discussed this earlier today, but would you mind if I opened up this discussion once again?"

"The Pensieve?"

"Yes. To be precise, the memories you saw in the Pensieve of my violation of you."

"You did not violate me, Severus. How many times do I have to repeat myself?" Hermione asked rhetorically. "But to be fair, let's refer to those events as the *incident*, in order to be as impartial as we can, regardless of our feelings or our opinions."

"I've referred to it as such in my own mind," Severus agreed, astonished once again as Hermione had proven herself to be analogous to him in many respects.

"But, to answer your question, no," she replied, "I do not mind discussing the incident again. Do you have something specific you would like to know?"

"Yes, I'd like to know why you seem so apt to spare my feelings, when it was you who was the victim."

Hermione closed her eyes and breathed deeply. Earlier today, following their return to the school after spending a night maintaining Remus as a sleepy and docile werewolf, Severus immediately placed his memories into a Pensieve and allowed her access. He had encouraged her to share her feelings in whatever manner she chose without asking for further elaboration. In truth, she seemed shaken at the images she witnessed. She saw herself react strongly to his attempted violation, and how her attempts at escape were met with force and quick magic to bind her to his will. She'd revealed that in her sexual fantasies she would occasionally imagine being forcefully taken and desired. And here she was, living through that fantasy, but nothing in the scene she witnessed was erotic or even had the ability to fuel any future sexual fantasies. Having the external memories without the internal experiences made her emotionally bereft. Detached she'd said as if she'd watched it happen to somebody else. This left her troubled, but not overly traumatized; as if she had not experienced the moment. Clinically, she experienced secondary trauma instead of primary, even though the traumatic event actually happened to her. He'd found it confusing. They'd both found it confusing.

"Severus, I... I'm not typically at a loss for words, but I find myself in a difficult position, unable to answer you properly. I want to feel the hurt and the pain that I witnessed, but I cannot. I assume that is a function of seeing this second hand as opposed to recalling the events from my own memory. I cannot honestly respond to you how I would've reacted to you post-event without the obliteration of those memories. I saw myself and I saw how hurt I was, but I cannot say if I would've forgiven you. Knowing what I know now, I would hope that I could have, but it's difficult to say. As for how I am reacting to you now, I also believe that it is a function of how events have transpired. It is easier for me to forgive what I can only recall as an external memory; if that makes any sense?"

"It does," Severus simply replied as he took her delicate hands in his. Gently running his thumbs over a few mosquito bites on the back of her hands, he continued, "I thank you for your complete honesty. I truly am sorry for the violence, the attempted violation, and the Obliviate. I don't know how I can make it up to you." He paused and removed his gaze from her hands to search her eyes. "I promise that I will work every day of my life to do so."

"Well, why don't we start with dinner first?" she asked cheekily, seemingly eager for the topic to die a final death.

"As you wish, milady." Severus snapped his fingers, and a serving-elf instantly appeared with two menus. Taking the proffered menus, and without opening them, Severus ordered two glasses of merlot. The elf disappeared then reappeared with the wine in an instant.

"Have you ever had merlot, Hermione?"

"No, I haven't. I'm not a wine connoisseur, but when I drink wine I usually order Chianti, mostly out of a lack of knowledge of what else to try."

"Sangiovese, the predominant grape in Chianti, is rather fruity and easy on the palate and as a result is quite pluggable. But the more distinct merlot appeals to those with a particular palate. Though if you like fruity, it tastes of berries, plums and currants. It's early ripening and therefore fleshy and considerably softer than other varieties. I hope you like it as much as I do."

As Hermione took her first sip, Severus found himself mesmerized by her luscious lips. His concentration wavered as her eyes lit up after tasting the drink. "It's wonderful! You're right; it's so smooth." She took another sip. "I've found a new favorite thanks to you! Umm, this is delightful. Severus, have you ever been here before? I've been gone so many years that I don't know any of the establishments anymore."

"Actually, this restaurant is fairly new. It opened about two months ago, although this is my first time visiting it."

"Interesting name, the Palate of Heroes, I wonder why they call it that?"

"I'm not certain, but what I am certain about is that I am hungry," Severus replied, handing her a menu. "Do you care to order now?"

As they opened their respective menus, each were immediately educated into the rationale behind the name 'Palate of Heroes' as the menus magically, and quite audibly, recited the specials of the day. There seemed to be a double echo as Hermione and Severus opened their menus within seconds of the other, activating the charm designed to read the menu to the patron. The recitation of the menu was decidedly female and began with the appetizers, salads, and entrées. It was the entrées that provided fodder for the appellation.

*Today's Entrée Specials include: Chicken à la Merlin, Dumbledore's Phoenix Stew, The Granger Ranger (offering free-range chicken), Snape's Fiery Atlantic Shrike (offering despining upon request), and the Potter Pot Roast with fingerling potatoes, baby carrots, fresh basil and sun dried tomatoes.*

Hermione and Snape shared a relieved glance as the menu completed its recitation, but winced when it continued. *For the children we have a selection of entrées. Please see the Measly Weasley Children's Menu on the back flap. And for those Muggle-fare loving patrons, we have haddock and chips, hot dogs, hamburgers with cheese or without, with chips or without, one burger or two...*

In unison they slammed the menus closed. They looked at each other with fixed stares, unable to believe the impudence of the restaurateurs. "Now we know why they name this place the Palate of Heroes," Severus said incredulously.

"I agree with the Granger Ranger matching my palate, but somehow I don't believe that Dumbledore would've ever have eaten Phoenix Stew. What about you, Severus?"



"Interesting, because I love Shrake and considering the number of spines on the damnable fish, I'd love to have someone despine them for me. What about Potter's item?"

"I happen to know that Harry loves pot roast. Severus, whoever designed these menus went to some trouble to find our culinary preferences... I think that when we return to the castle we should find Albus' painting and ask him what his favorite meal was. Somehow, I think he may have kept that little secret from Fawkes."

"So, shall I guess that your entrée of choice will be the Granger Ranger?" Severus smirked as his lip curled into a knowing smile.

"Yes, you can, and shall I guess that your entrée of choice will be the Snape's Fiery Atlantic Shrake, with complimentary despining?"

"Yes, you may, though I'd prefer it to be extra fiery."

"Why are you hiding?" Hermione asked Severus over the increasing shrill of the eccentric menu.

"I know that woman, not to mention that I've no need to be bothered with Potter on my first date with you. What about you?"

"I know her too. I chased her away one evening when I went to visit Harry. I'm sure there is no love lost between us two. Just a little animosity."

"I'd rather not say."

"Hermione, Severus? Wow, how good to see you both here, and together no less! Hey, have you seen the Potter Pot Roast? This place is so cool!" Harry jabbered excitedly as he treated them to a quick-acknowledged wink, "Hermione, you remember Frances, don't you?" Both women eyed each other with a curt and tight-lipped smile.

"Madam," Severus responded in greeting. He noted Frances' eyes were downcast, refusing to meet his gaze. He was pleased with her response, or lack thereof, considering the last time he saw her she was half dressed and retreating from his bedroom faster than a chocolate frog on Easter Sunday.

He returned his attention to his charred menu, just as Hermione spoke to Frances. "Severus tells me that you and he know each other."

"I don't believe so," Frances immediately responded.

"Well, I've never known Severus to be wrong. Certainly you must know him. He's a war hero, you know? Just like Harry...." Hermione's lips pursed as she seemed to scrutinize the possibilities before her. "Harry, didn't Ron say he had a new girlfriend and *her* name was Frances?"

"Um, yeah, I think so."

"Hermione!" both men screamed in an unconventional display of unity. For a moment, Hermione considered that perhaps there was an unwritten code of solidarity for wizards, regardless of friend, foe, or indifference.

"Perhaps you can find Ron and tell him his girlfriend is a tart. When he's crying on your shoulder, maybe you and he can find solace and comfort in one another?"

"Thanks a lot, Hermione." Harry peered at her in disgust. "Now, I don't think I'll ever be able to get an erection again with that unfortunate picture in my head."

"That's what you get for your cheek, mister. No go and leave Severus and I to our date, please."

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"If you want to keep a woman happy, you must make it your business to ensure that she is sexually satisfied. Do you hear me? And that means the big 'O'!" Hermione emphasized her point with wide eyes and outstretched hands. "She must orgasm at least once during every sexual encounter. Before, during, or after the actual intercourse itself it doesn't matter as long as she finds release." Hermione took another sip of her drink and continued with barely a pause. "Believe me, many men are self-centered and are only interested in satisfying themselves. I see it all the time in couples therapy, not to mention through my own firsthand experiences. That's a typical female complaint. The male's is that she doesn't orally stimulate him enough. Oddly, I often get the same complaint from women.

"My motto, when it comes to orgasms is, *one is nice, two is better, three... I'll love you forever*"

"One of my most important objectives in couples therapy, or in my individual sessions with men, is to teach the man on how to pleasure a woman." At her statement

As Severus slipped into his seat, Hermione noticed his expression. "Why is there a smirk plastered on your face?"

"Are you certain it's not a simmer?" he teased.

"I am certainly certain," she responded in kind.

"No reason for my smirk, Hermione, other than my delight and burning desire to be near you again."

Hermione noticed he was getting good at wiggling his eyebrows. "You are one smooth talker! Who would've thought that Severus Snape had it in him?"

"Remember, Hermione, I am in control at all times. A Slytherin, and especially a Slytherin Death Eater-turned-spy, turned war hero, never sheds his skin. If I am allowing you to see this side of me, it is only because I choose you worthy of seeing it."

Hermione was entranced by his controlled passion. "Severus, I am truly flattered that you consider me friend enough to allow me to see all of you."

"Indeed," Severus said through his broad evil grin. "Seeing all of me shall come soon enough, my dear."

Hermione felt a flush begin at her tummy that quickly spread upward and created the blush that seemed to have become a permanent fixture on her face tonight. Her body was responding with the sensitivity of a virgin, and she was far from that. "Um, yes, well, that sounds rather delightful, Severus, though for right now I need to return to the loo."

"Excellent."

"What did you say?" Hermione asked, as she couldn't understand why 'excellent' would be a response to her visiting the lavatory.

"Oh, nothing to be concerned about."

Hermione looked at him suspiciously and then realized that he still had a significant amount of cocktail left to consume. In order to have his entire dose of the little blue pill, he'd have to finish the remainder of his cocktail. "Severus, in light of the wonderful evening we've had, why don't we share a toast?"

"I'd love to." He picked up his cocktail and brought it up to Hermione's, meeting it with a chime.

"Severus, to a magnificent evening!" Hermione toasted, holding all of her hopes in the dust particles floating unsuspectingly within its alcohol suspension.

"Yes," Severus replied seductively, "and to a satisfying one."

To be continued...

A/N:

\*\*Colossal thanks go to Wartcap for beta'ing this story. She is my muse, my editor, my mentor and my friend.

\*\*One more chapter to go before this story comes to an end! I hope you enjoy this installment and thank you for following.

## The IT Factor

### *Chapter 15 of 15*

Severus experiences Erectile Dysfunction. Hermione is a Sex Therapist. Will she be able to cure him?

#### CHAPTER FIFTEEN: The IT Factor

Hermione was overcome with extreme sensations, and everything assaulted her senses. She was overwhelmed by the enormity of the restaurant's gaudy décor that she hadn't noticed as intensely as she did now, other than the beautifully enchanted ceiling so reminiscent of Hogwarts. But now, as if through some unseen and unparalleled magical enchantment, she became acutely aware of the intense light coming from three massive chandeliers, which she had admired earlier, but through her suddenly startling senses, she now saw that they were adorned with baby cherubs, majestically brandishing wands that lit the restaurant. Hermione was surprised at the decorative details and could only imagine the intricately woven magic involved in creating such meticulous garishness.

It wasn't only her vision that had been affected by this heightening of sensations. Her hearing was keen as well. And while she heard the static noise of others conversing, it was Severus' breathing that captivated her attention. He was breathing deeply, evenly, as he held her hands in his. In their current position, she could feel each swipe of his thumb caressing the backs of her hands, magnified tenfold. It was as if each stroke were alight with fire, which left behind a tingling sensation wrought with need and desire.

She was acutely aware of Severus, his cologne and just the smell of sweat and man. It was intoxicating and exhilarating, and she was nearly panting with desire. Hermione tilted her head back sensually in a reflexive response to the sexual desires building within. She felt overcome by the intensity of the sensations, but it was the vibrations of *him* that left her with a burning desire.

Severus' raven eyes, dark as the abyss, stared intently back at her in awe. She had transformed from his cool, witty, and level-headed date to a woman who was lost in the depths of her own sensations. She was breathless, wrought with anticipation and practically exuding eroticism. Hopefully, he recognized her transformation for what it was and didn't think her altered state was a result of an overdue and much needed visit to the loo.

She sought to return his attentions and struggled to observe him through her lust-induced fog. Hermione noticed him fidget in his seat and make some quick maneuvers to adjust his trousers. She hoped her plan was working and his body was responding to the medication. Although she would have preferred a natural response, some things should not be left to fate alone. After all, pharmaceuticals were as much a part of sex therapy as exploring teaspoon fetishes and blaming one's premature weaning.

"Severus, are you well?"

"Am I well?" he returned. "Are *you* well?"

"Yes, yes," she responded breathlessly as she threaded her fingers through her hair, noticing its silky texture as her curls caressed each finger. "I'm fine. I... I'm better than well. I feel so... alive!"

Hermione was startled by a scraping noise and realized it was the sound of a chair scratching against the hardwood floorboards. She looked up and noticed Severus above her, his arm extended in invitation and his features formed in a most delicious, albeit serious, expression. "It is time we left this establishment, my dear." The timber of his voice dropped an octave or two and vibrated through her body like the primeval, hypnotic beat of a tribal drum. Hermione instinctively complied with his demand, wanting nothing more than to give herself to the man who had fueled her desires since her return to England.

Severus held onto her and guided her out of the restaurant. As they walked toward the exit, Hermione fell against him as a surprising, albeit not completely unwelcome, sensation overcame her. The cotton gusset of her panties massaged her clitoris, stimulating her as she walked. She looked up at her companion and saw passion in his eyes as he seemingly understood the pleasant turmoil she was experiencing.

"Shall we retire to my chambers?" he asked once they exited the restaurant and walked into an evening breeze sprinkled with gentle rain.

Hermione shrieked as the rain, although misty and no more than a fine drizzle, pummeled her skin. Instinctually, she wrapped her arms around herself for protection and turned her body toward Severus.

"It's just a little rain, Hermione," Severus whispered as he pulled her closer to shelter her from the rain.

"Severus, something is wrong with me!" Hermione cried. "I don't understand, but I feel as if I'm being tortured or something. Sometimes cruelly and sometimes wonderfully." She looked up at his face, and with a trembling voice, she shared, "I feel... and see... and hear... everything!"

"Severus, please help me." Hermione pleaded, "I can't move any further without being overtaken by my sensations!"

"You are more than well, Hermione. You are brilliant. You have nothing to worry about, love. I will Apparate us." Severus wrapped his arms around her protectively; gentle enough not to cause her pain yet firm enough to successfully Apparate.

Hermione closed her eyes to calm the raging storm and prepared for her Side-Along-Apparition. Severus' strong arms felt soothing. She nestled into his body, contouring her own against his in a desperate attempt to feel his body heat seep into her and calm her frayed nerves. She didn't ever want to let him go.

Severus whispered into her ear, his warm breath an unending trickle down and into her body, akin to a luscious encasement in warm dark chocolate. As his warm breath washed over her again, she realized he was attempting to get her attention. She pulled away and immediately realized that they had Apparated and Hogwarts was in the distance.

"Severus, I can't walk to the castle!" she exclaimed. "How am I ever going to get from here to there without driving myself crazy?"

"What will happen, my dear?"

"Severus, please, I feel everything! Don't you understand? As I walk, I feel *everything*!"

Severus looked at her and seemingly understood her special predicament, saying, "Then, it shall be one exciting walk... one exciting and stimulating walk indeed!" He chortled and, taking her hand gently, led her on their long trek toward the castle.

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She trembled. The coffee mug in her hand clattered and was precariously close to toppling over when Severus extracted it from her hands and sat beside her. No words were spoken as he took her hand in his and pulled her closer. She leaned against him and sighed, enjoying the feel of his hard body against hers. During their walk to the castle, Hermione shared with him, as best she could, considering her current affliction, how his embrace had calmed her and helped her to rein in the onslaught of sensations she was experiencing. As he sat next to her, he pulled her toward him and helped to mold her body against his in an apparent test of her theory.

He soothed her by his mere presence, but she was gratified that he took an active role in calming her as he gently stroked her back, creating repeated sensual circles. While he comforted her and kept her oversensitivity at bay, she knew that his arms felt right. Despite all of her uncertainty and desire to experience all that life had to offer, this man, with all of his complexities, was what she desired. This was where she wanted to be. Yet, despite her desire for him, they were hardly a perfect couple. Since her return to Hogwarts, she knew she would do what needed to be done to ensnare him. Well, here she was in his arms, and she was a wreck. They had played games with one another, been angry, been jealous, and in the midst of all of that tumultuousness, they opened up and expressed their deepest confessions. Furthermore, today, on their first date, she resorted to Slytherin tactics to ensure a successful and satisfying evening. Definitely not a typical therapist modality to treatment, but then again, she was acting outside of her role as therapist and within the framework of Hermione Granger, woman in love.

"You are very quiet. What's the matter, Hermione?"

"I was just thinking about us and all that we've been through to get to tonight."

"Interesting ride, wasn't it?" he asked.

"Severus," she said, looking into the endless depths, the exquisite ebony in his eyes. "You say that as if the ride is over. Unfortunately, I have another confession to make."

"It's only fair, now that I sit here in your chambers and in your arms. I... well... I did something tonight to ensure that we would have a satisfying evening. In essence, I'm still playing games with you."

Severus did not respond and maintained his embrace on Hermione as he apparently waited for her to continue with her confession. His silence bolstered her ego and gave her the courage to continue.

"There's a Muggle medication that I told you about during our first therapy session that is used to assist men to obtain an erection." Hermione averted her eyes and found her courage as she seemingly memorized the hairs on the back of his hands. "Tonight, while at the restaurant, I ensured that you ingested that medication."

Severus pulled away from her and stared down into her eyes with a sincere look of incredulosity. Her hyper-senses allowed her to smell his increased perspiration, as he was assuredly furious with her. She hoped he did not recall her diatribe about the increased chances of heart failure and consequently death with this particular medication. He would certainly know she was errant and unconscionable.

Hermione kept her eyes trained on his hands, and what happened next caused her to turn toward Severus, and it was now her turn to wear a genuine look of incredulity. Severus Snape was roaring with laughter. A deep, raucous laugh that would have been contagious had she not been so surprised to find it emanating from him.

"I am sincerely happy that you are so amused, Severus. I was concerned that you would be angry with me."

"No, not angry. It appears that you and I may never be free of games. Life must be controlled and never left to chance, and I believe you and I are cut of the same cloth, my dear. I would imagine that now is the time for complete confessions, and if you are done, I shall share mine."

"You have another confession to make?" she asked, recalling the seriousness of his previous confessions.

"Only when you are finished."

"I am," she replied, shocked with his witty repartee.

"Are you certain?"

"Yes."

"Well then, after your confessions yesterday, you shared with me very intimate details of your difficulty achieving release with a partner. I wanted you to have a positive experience with me, and I created a potion to aid you in increasing your sensitivity to sexual stimulation."

"You did what?"

"Apparently the same as you, my dear, with the exception that my Virility Potion put you in no danger of death as opposed to what you have done." His voice held no resentment or anger.

"You remember that and you're still not upset with me?"

"Hermione, I have another level of confession, and after which, I promise you there is nothing more for me to confess. I planned a successful evening for both of us tonight, and in doing so I not only created a potion for you, but I also..." Severus stopped in mid-sentence, removed a vial from his robes, and extracted a little blue pill, rolling it between his thumb and forefinger. "I also took one of these."

"Severus! That's... that's..." she shrieked, "VIAGRA!"

"And this is what you gave me, is it not?"

"YES! Oh my gosh, now you have two doses in your system!"

He looked at her with a mysterious glint in his eyes. "Well then, that certainly would explain this," he said as he boldly took hold of her hand and, as if giving her time to pull away, slowly positioned it on his groin. Hermione allowed him to lead her, and she willingly touched him. She felt his hardness and returned her gaze to his eyes, where she simultaneously saw and felt his desire for her.

"Oh, my," Hermione whispered. "I was about to apologize for slipping you the pill, but now *feel* that is no longer necessary."

"Apologies are not necessary, as long as you're prepared to deal with the consequences."

"Consequences?" she asked, panting with anticipation.

"Oh, yes, very severe consequences," he said as he leaned into her causing her to recline in her attempt to maintain eye contact. He held her gaze, her eyes interminably locked with his. "It appears you and I are in for a very long night. Are you up to the challenge?" he asked as he slowly brought his lips to her face. Hermione closed her eyes in preparation for his kiss, and what he did surprised her. Severus Snape licked her face.

Despite the shock, Hermione was ever so aroused. He left an erotic wet trail from her ear to the nape of her neck, and as she recovered from her initial surprise, he continued to lick her, gently and thoroughly. With her increased sensitivity, each stroke of his tongue left her in sublime delirium.

"Severus, this feels so good."

"Umm, humm," he responded, apparently too busy to remove himself from his current task.

"Mmm, I never knew that licking could feel so soothing." She was lost in her sensations until she shrieked at feeling Severus nip her teasingly on her shoulder. He pulled back and searched her eyes. She followed his movements and watched as he traveled down her body, turned his head and bit her arm. With a smirk on his face, he looked toward her, held her gaze and with a swipe of his tongue, soothed her.

"Are you injured?" he asked glibly. "Shall I make it all better?"

It was her turn to be speechless, and all she was able to say was, "Ummm, huumm."

"You are quite the delectable dish, Granger."

"Granger? Delectable?" she quipped through bated breath. "Are you talking about the Granger Ranger dish from the Palate of Heroes?"

Hermione heard a deep, guttural growl. "You, Hermione Granger, are my dish, and I must devour you...*now*!"

Severus held out his hand. As she stood up, he grabbed her and effortlessly tossed her onto his shoulders. From her new vantage point, she saw the lounge retreating as he walked to where she assumed was his bedchamber. He placed her on her feet and left the room, and he quickly returned with a bottle of wine and two goblets. He sat comfortably on his bed and, with a penetrating stare and a nod of his head, encouraged her to do the same.

"I love a good red wine when I eat," Severus purred and popped the cork out of the beautifully decorated bottle. For the first time Hermione felt a little concerned that he was not just speaking metaphorically. It was obvious... She would become his meal tonight, and she was utterly excited to become his feast.

Hermione was completely taken by this man. As she sat on his bed, fully clothed and sipping smooth red wine, she was enchanted. Severus exuded sensuality. He was in control of the moment, and despite having a surging erection, he was in command of not only his own body, but of hers as well. She was eager to forgo the luscious drink of crushed grapes for something of even greater epicurean value. She wanted to taste him.

"Now, where was I?" he teased. "Ah, yes. I believe I was right here," he said as he set aside his goblet and laced his fingers in her hair, pulling her face to his, and kissed her. She immediately opened her mouth to him and was surprised when he shared his wine with her.

"Do you approve?"

She nodded her head in the positive and whimpered in anticipation. She was becoming as dumb as a doorknocker in his arms.

"Speechless?" he quipped. "I'll see if I can remedy that."

He laid her back onto the bed and kissed her gently on and around her lips. He was sensual and tender. His kisses traveled down her body, and he nestled between her breasts, kissing their valley and coaxing the fabric further away from her young, supple flesh. Hermione undulated her body to increase contact with his mouth, wanting to feel his lips on her sensitive breasts. He pressed his hard body against hers, his heat radiating into her and increasing her desire.

"Let me taste you, love. I want to..." he paused and moved up her body to whisper in her ear, "eat you."

His smile was wickedly sinister. It spoke of mirth, but also warned of danger. It was glorious to behold. With a mumbled Accio, his wand was in his hand, and just as quickly their clothes were off. He was definitely in control.

He pressed their naked bodies together and kissed her deeply, seemingly exploring her mouth. Hermione tasted the wine on his tongue and sucked, wanting to taste more. He opened his mouth further and her kisses became unbridled. Hermione was intoxicated by his expert kiss. He was fierce and commanding and clearly expressing his craving for her through his exploration. Their kiss intensified as he returned his attentions to her breasts, massaging them in slow circling motions and lightly squeezing her nipples. Hermione moaned with deep pleasure as she felt a direct connection between her breasts and her mons, as if she were a marionette and he was her puppeteer.

He caressed her body, as if trying to memorize her through his touch. She enjoyed his rough hands and feeling his unabashed desire press against her. His tongue soon

"If your fragile ego must be reminded, you, Professor, are the epitome of sexuality. You exude power and strength of character. And that is very sexy. Your scathing tongue and biting remarks are intoxicating. However, now I have experienced you, and I can assuredly say that your bite and your soothing tongue are even more intoxicating."

