

Better With Chocolate

by DeeMichelle

Five years after the end of the war, Snape encounters Hermione Granger in a bookstore, where she is buying a book about autoeroticism. Will he give her hell - or LESSONS?

Good Books, Better Coffee

Chapter 1 of 4

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Ch 1

Severus Snape sat back in the green padded chair outside a small café in Muggle London. He sat, remembering the first time he had happened upon this quaint place whilst searching for a certain hard-to-find herbal book in the bookstore across the way.

Severus sank deep into the memory.

On that particular day, he had not found the book for which he had been searching. So, he had left the antiquated shop in a fit of pique. He had also left the bookstore's owner quite red-faced from being told just how inadequate his book selection really was.

Severus had let the shop's door close on its own as he stepped out onto the quiet pavement. Black eyes glanced up and down at the shops adjoining and across from the bookstore. He noticed a café directly across the way. His mouth quirked up just a tad on one side, and he strode into the traffic to cross the street. Screeching tires and a man shouting obscenities stopped Severus mid-stride. He looked down towards the bumper of the red vehicle and its close proximity to his knees, then raised his gaze slowly to the still screaming driver, and met his eye. The driver, who had exited his vehicle, began to assess the man he had almost run into and thought better about continuing his rampage. The driver got back into his car, quietly closed the door, and stared straight ahead, waiting for the man in black to move. Severus merely looked around at passers-by and strode across the street to his destination.

The café's front entrance was large and entirely made of glass. The sun shone and reflected beautifully back at Severus. He glanced to the left of the door and found two small, round tables each had two high-backed green cushioned chairs. He supposed these were for the shop's customers. As he looked from the chairs to the paned glass in front of him, he noticed a perfect reflection of the bookstore.

Smiling to himself, Severus reached for the large, brushed-silver door handle and pulled it open. The inward smile visibly reached his eyes as he inhaled the glorious scent of his favourite morning drink.

Coffee.

He entered into what seemed to be another world and, from someone from the wizarding world, that was saying something. The shop was much larger on the inside than it seemed from the outside. Its floor was a beautiful yellow marble that reflected the lighting nicely. He turned to look out the wall of paned glass and found the sunshine had not permeated the windows. What he saw was a cool silver mist that allowed those inside to look out, but no one from outside was able to look in.

Impressive for a Muggle shop, he thought to himself as he began a full turn to survey the rest of this intriguing place.

He had frequented many cafés in his escapades for both Dumbledore and Voldemort. None had made him feel as comfortable as this one did.

Along the left wall were small alcoves. The silvery-green drapery that hung open along the sides could enclose each so that patrons could sit and enjoy their purchases in relative privacy. He nodded internally as he turned more to the right and thought, *I could have used those a time or two over the past twenty-five years*. The front of the shop boasted a long counter that displayed various pastries, homemade sweets, chocolates, and biscuits. The walls behind the counter held the various items for sale and their respective prices. Severus continued his surveillance and turned once more to the right.

The opposite area from the secluded alcoves had individual couches, small tables, and chairs arranged for larger groups, each piece upholstered nicely in rich shades of red and gold.

How quaint, he silently sneered. *It looks like the Gryffindor common room exploded along that wall*

He quickly completed his turn by facing the mist-shaded windows.

"Yes, indeed," he said aloud.

"May I help you, sir?"

Severus turned his gaze from the window to glance over his right shoulder at the intruder. Looking the person up and down, he replied, "Yes."

He turned sharply, walked around the now perturbed employee, and went to the counter to place his order.

After a moment, he turned once more to the girl standing mere feet from him. Glancing at her nametag, he questioned commandingly, "Mykell is it? Well, *Mykell*, are you going to help me or just stand there looking idiotic?"

Severus' rudeness snapped the young woman out of her anger only long enough to give a curt, "Yes, sir," as she moved behind the counter.

"Now, *sir*, how may I help you?" Mykell asked as politely as she could.

"Coffee. Black."

"What size, sir?" she asked sweetly as she gestured toward the display of cup sizes.

"The last," Severus directed.

"Fine. One extra large coffee, black," she repeated as she rang the purchase into the till. "Any biscuits or scones with that today, sir?" she asked.

Severus merely cocked his head to one side and sighed heavily as he handed her the Muggle money for his drink.

"Okay. One coffee it is. To take away?" she asked hopefully as she put the payment into the till's drawer.

"You may bring it to me outside," Severus directed, then turned and walked through the people gathering behind him and out the front door. He sat in a green padded chair facing his reflection in the glass, staring at himself. Mykell brought him his coffee, placed a small piece of chocolate on the saucer next to his cup, and went back inside without a word. He glanced down at the table and then at her retreating form. Severus looked down once more at the chocolate, picked up his mug, inhaled the richness, and drank. As the hot liquid reached his taste buds, Severus' eyes closed slowly, and he savoured the flavour. Its essence was dark, and he thought it was the best coffee he had tasted in a very long time.

As the dark brew slid slowly down his throat, he opened his eyes. He decided this place would suffice for him to visit again. He finished his drink, set down the mug, stood, walked to the nearest Apparition point, and vanished.

That had been three weeks ago to the day. Each visit mimicked the first. He would order, take his place outside facing the reflective windows, and wait for his order. Each day, Mykell placed a chocolate on his saucer; each time, he left it untouched.

This particular day, Severus felt accomplished. He had finally acquired the herbal text from the bookstore across the way. The shop owner had seen him every day for the past three weeks sitting in front of the coffee shop. Severus would only remain long enough to drink one cup of coffee, and then disappear until the next day around the same time.

The bookstore owner thought it was an odd routine for such a sour man. The book the strange man had been seeking had finally arrived; as little as the shopkeeper wanted to speak again with the sharp-tongued customer, he finally found the courage to approach the stranger as he sat drinking his coffee and to tell him that his book had arrived.

Severus sat sipping his coffee for a few moments, while flipping through the new text he had been so fortunate to acquire, and then remembered the chocolate. He set his cup on the table next to the saucer and ran his left hand over the top of the small, milky piece; his wandless, non-verbal spell detecting no toxin in the sweet.

At least she is not trying to poison me he thought to himself. *One can never be too cautious*

He took the piece of chocolate between his thumb and middle finger, turning it over, and admiring the small flecks of a darker substance. He opened his mouth and bit into the most luxurious thing he had ever tasted. The chocolate was soft and melted slowly on his tongue. He felt as if his taste buds were dancing in his mouth.

"It's better with coffee," a voice interrupted.

Severus stiffened and regarded the young man standing by his table.

"It truly is better with coffee. Try it," the young man suggested, gesturing towards the table and Severus' cup with an outstretched hand.

"Go. Away," Severus chided.

"I'm Marcus. I work here." The young man persisted and turned his hand as if to shake Severus' own. "I came to see if you cared for anything else." He pulled his hand back when he realised the glower Severus continued to give him indicated that he was unlikely to respond to the gesture.

"No," replied Severus. "This will do for today."

Marcus gave a slight bow with his head, turned to walk away, and then sat down at the opposite table.

"I'm having a break," he told Severus when he sat down and caught Severus' deepening scowl.

"And you thought you would annoy the clientele," Severus stated and lowered his eyes back to the chocolate piece he left on the saucer's edge. He was careful not to catch the boy's eye as he picked it up and placed it neatly on the tip of his tongue. He then took a long sip of his coffee.

His eyes involuntarily closed with the exotic sensation of the melting taste of heaven as it mixed with his coffee. An audible sigh escaped his lips as he swallowed the concoction. He opened his eyes to the sound of a chair scraping the pavement. What he saw was a very smug look on the young man's face.

Severus turned his chair towards the large window, giving Marcus his back, and remained there until he finished his coffee. He gathered his book and rose to leave when something caught his eye in the reflective glass. He quickly turned toward the bookstore and narrowed his eyes to focus. It was a woman's form entering the bookstore, a shapely, well-defined form, in Severus' opinion. She had wavy brown hair that cascaded down her back to just below her sleek shoulders.

"She's beautiful, isn't she?" Marcus admired as he followed Severus' gaze.

Severus ignored the boy and stood. He was now on a mission. He walked the length of the pavement, keeping his eye on the bookstore all the while, until he reached the corner. This time, he quickly checked for traffic before crossing to the other side. He glanced through the window when he reached the bookstore. He saw the woman stop and talk to the shopkeeper.

"Bloody hell," Severus said aloud, causing a woman passing by to cover her child's ears and admonish him with a scowl that could have matched one of his own. Severus just rolled his eyes as he moved to the door and tried to slip quietly inside, unnoticed. He sidled along a row of fantasy books to get a better look at the woman. He caught an improved glimpse of her curvy backside when he knelt down and pretended to peruse the selection before him.

The woman wore a red see-through blouse over a white sleeveless top tucked into black Muggle jeans that hugged her arse nicely. A red belt emphasized her waistline perfectly. His eyes followed her pleasing legs down to her black boots and back up again. The woman was paying particular attention to the selection on the top shelf.

What a perfect opportunity, he thought to himself as he rose from his crouched position.

Severus stealthily slipped around the shelving and moved in behind the woman. He reached for the book she had been stretching towards and whispered in her ear, "Allow me."

He felt her body stiffen at his words, so he stepped away from her, still holding the book. She turned with a stunned look on her face.

"Professor Snape?"

It's All In The Details

Chapter 2 of 4

Five years after the end of the war, Snape encounters Hermione Granger in a bookstore, where she is buying a book about autoeroticism. Will he give her hell - or LESSONS?

"Miss Granger," Severus acknowledged.

"Erm, hello, Professor," Hermione faltered, "and please, call me Hermione." She brushed a stray lock behind her ear and smiled at him.

Severus gave a slight nod of agreement and said, "Hermione." He stood staring at her; her mannerisms intrigued him. She seemed nervous. Her breath hitched the moment she had turned around to face him. His eyes travelled down her slender neck and rested for a moment on her slightly heaving cleavage. Memories of her years as his student flooded his mind. *She has turned into a beautiful woman over the past five years* he thought as his admiring eyes travelled back to meet hers.

An uncomfortable silence fell between them.

Hermione was the first to speak. "Well, Professor, it's been nice seeing you again." She shuffled her things and turned to go.

"Hermione," Severus said tauntingly, "you forgot your book." *This is going to be fun.* She stopped without turning around, and he considered closing the distance between them; he could sense that she was deliberating would she turn around to claim the book, or just move on without it? *Your love of reading will make you turn around* he prompted her silently. He then looked down, discovered the title, and let out a short laugh.

She turned around sharply at his laughter and reached for the book. "Thank you."

She waited.

And waited.

When she realised he was not going to give her the book, she withdrew her hand and placed it firmly on her hip. "Was there something else?" she inquired.

She is a feisty little grown-up know-it-all he thought, as he considered her form once more. He leant back against the bookshelf behind him, crossed his arms, and stared openly at her. "*Felicitous Fantasy: Autoeroticism Made Easy.* What an interesting title." His voice still held a taunting challenge.

"Professor Snape, I am twenty-three years old. If I choose to read a book written about sexual fantasies, I will." She grabbed the book from him and stalked away.

So I've noticed. Severus pulled himself up fully and turned to watch the sway of her retreating arse.

Severus waited for the door to chime; notifying him of her departure, then turned to the shelf and took a copy of the book Hermione had just purchased.

"I could use a good laugh," he said aloud. He flipped through the pages and became aware that this was not just a basic "How To" book this particular version was much more detailed and included meticulous drawings.

How Muggles stand pictures that do not move is beyond me he thought as he turned to the front page.

Its contents page featured:

1. The First Time

2. How To Please Yourself

a. Women

b. Men

3. Begin Your Fantasy

a. Daytime

b. Night-time

4. Bring A Partner Into Your Fantasy World

As Severus reached the title of chapter 4, Hermione's face flashed into his mind. He groaned audibly and forcefully closed the book. He advanced to the counter and the waiting bookstore owner. Severus gave the owner a "Do not say a word" glare and set the book down.

"Ahem." The shopkeeper cleared his throat while trying not to smile at the dark man. "Yes, sir, will that be all for you today?"

Severus could see the glimmer of suppressed laughter in the man's eyes and replied, "Yes. That will be all." He noticed the man glance at the title, look towards the front door, and then back again.

Severus followed his gaze but saw nothing. "Today, if you don't mind," he said, gaining the man's attention once more as he tapped his fingers on the counter impatiently.

Severus paid for his purchase and went out onto the quiet streets of Muggle London. He glanced at the café and his reflection in its windows and decided that he had imbibed enough coffee for today.

He walked to the Apparition point and went directly home.

What he did not see was a pair of brown eyes watching his every move from the window of his favourite café.

Severus Apparated into his sitting room, went to the kitchen, made some tea, and returned to the sitting room. He took it to his preferred chair next to the fireplace, sat and closed his eyes.

Of all the places she could have chosen to be, he thought derisively. "Little miss know-it-all," he said aloud.

He had not thought about her in quite some time. Thumbing the spine of the text still in hand, he recalled Hermione Granger, the woman. Severus sipped his tea and began to relax. He envisioned her legs and retreating arse once more. Setting his teacup on the sofa table, he released an audible growl and stood; beginning to pace the floor, he let his mind wander.

He had not had intimate thoughts of a specific woman in a very long time. Each time he had taken himself in hand in surrogate for a warm body, he would simply envision a woman with dark hair, luscious curves, and a terrific intellect. He was tired of the dim-witted women he picked up in Diagon Alley. They were all right, but none ever seemed good enough for more than a one-night affair, neither could they uphold an intelligent conversation.

Hermione could, a voice interjected.

He had *never* thought of a student in that manner. "Never a student, past or present," he said aloud to himself in disgust.

It has been long enough, Severus, the voice within him reminded. *She has not been your student in years. Did you not see the way she reacted to your presence? That was not a student afraid of the "Greasy Bat of the Dungeons."*

"She's a bloody Gryffindor!" he argued with himself.

Yes. One who is purchasing an explicit book about self-pleasure.

"True," Severus agreed. "She has become an alluring Gryffindor who purchases erotic books. How intriguing."

Severus stopped and retrieved the book, and using his index finger to scan the contents once more, he found the section specifically aimed at helping women find their own pleasurable release. He opened the book to that segment and began to read.

"Yes, yes," he said somewhat sarcastically after reading the first two paragraphs. *If a woman does not know that part by now, she needs a more remedial textbook,* he thought to himself.

He scanned the next few pages until something of interest caught his eye.

On the left hand page was a detailed drawing of a woman. Her hands were covering her breasts secretively as she lay upon a bed, the sheet covering her hips, yet leaving her silky legs exposed. The caption to the right read: "Find a place to relax, place your hands lightly over your breasts, and let the warmth of your hands warm your soft flesh."

Severus felt something hard hit the back of his legs. He never took his eyes away from the picture as he lowered himself onto the sofa. He settled back and continued to turn the pages slowly. Without looking, he reached for his tea and drank quickly, as if trying to douse a fire beginning to burn within.

He began taking deep breaths as he read the captions that accompanied each picture.

The next drawing portrayed that same woman with her hands placed gently on her stomach. He turned the page once more to see if her hands would travel further down her body in each picture.

They did.

"Mercy," he said aloud as he found an interesting illustration several pages ahead.

The drawing displayed the woman with her eyes closed, lips softly parted, one hand caressing her breast while the other hand disappeared between her thighs.

Severus closed the book, making sure his middle finger kept his place. He reached once more for his tea and muttered a quick Warming Charm. He tried to clear his mind as he shifted once more on the sofa and drank.

How can a Muggle book arouse me like this? he wondered. *Muggle women have never interested me before.* Severus sat up a bit and set his tea back down onto the table.

"Muggle women didn't look like Hermione in her tight jeans either," he reminded the voice aloud.

Just open the book and picture the witch caressing those lovely breasts, travelling over her navel, down her belly, over her thighs, penetra...

"Enough!" Severus stood as he shouted at the voice within.

The book had fallen from his grasp and lay open, displaying the section where the woman was covering her breasts.

"I'll fix this," Severus decided forcefully. One swift movement and his wand was over the book. A few unintelligible words, a bit of *foolish wand waving*, and the deed was done. The force of his desire transformed the book to reflect the focus of his thoughts.

Nodding to himself as he picked up the book, he said, "Yes, this will do much better."

He held the book a bit closer to his face and smirked at the now moving picture.

"Hello, Hermione."

Teasing And Pleasing

Chapter 3 of 4

Severus gets down to business. Hermione tells him about hers. Let the games begin! Chess anyone?

The woman in Severus' version had taken on the likeness of one Hermione Granger know-it-all, female component of the Golden Trio... woman.

The conjured Hermione lifted one hand from her breast and seductively waved at Severus. She was lowering her eyes to gaze at her own body and then back up to meet the black eyes of Severus Snape.

Severus quickly turned the pages and confirmed that the charm had worked on the entire text.

"This is more like it," he said smugly as he flipped back to the book's Hermione, who was now caressing her stomach and teasing her navel with her index finger. She was making a trail from below her navel, up through the valley of her perfect breasts, up her slender throat to her waiting lips. Hermione's mouth opened, coyly licked her lips, and let her finger slide over her pink tongue.

Severus felt a carnal jolt go straight into his groin as she began to tongue and suck on her own finger and then created the erotic trail up and down her body over and over again.

Another moan escaped his lips, and he moved to sit once more on the sofa. After several long minutes Severus ran his hand along his own body, following the same trail as Hermione had done along her naked form.

After a few moments, he turned the page. Severus knew this version would delve further into self-exploration. What he saw was Hermione teasing her breasts with one hand, pinching and caressing each nipple as they formed into taut peaks. Her other hand was touching her thighs, creating a large v-shaped trail as she went from one knee, to the junction of her desire, to the other knee, and back again.

Once again, Severus felt drawn to move his practised hands over his own aching body. He transferred his weight so that he was lying partially on his side, his left knee raised and resting against the sofa back. He undid the buttons on his trousers ever so slowly, allowing his fingers to tease the heated flesh beneath the cloth. He lifted his hips and slid his trousers off, making slow caresses down and back up his legs. He traced the line from knee to junction and cupped his balls, pressing them between his fingers, and then moved a calloused hand over his throbbing cock. Severus stroked himself with the palm of his hand, feeling the heat emanate from the direct contact.

He turned another page and beheld Hermione's form spread across both pages. The caption read, "Feel free to explore."

And she did.

Her hands were travelling over her now flushed skin, between her thighs and dipping slender fingers in so far that they disappeared from Severus' view.

Severus watched the movements as he began touching himself anew. He set the book aside for a moment, took in a deep breath, and watched through heavily lidded eyes as he wrapped his long fingers around himself, holding both his breath and his soft skin for a moment, and then releasing his breath slowly as he began this firm caress from base to glistening tip. His strokes were long and languorous.

He positioned himself so that he could once again watch the book. Hermione's form had continued its teasing and pleasuring strokes. Severus noticed her quickening movements, the rapid rise and fall of her chest, her bottom lip caught between perfect teeth, and eyes tightly closed. He too began to quicken his pace. The vision before him turned her head and opened her eyes.

He could have sworn he heard Hermione shout his name as his own release radiated through his body.

Severus allowed himself a few moments, and as his breathing returned to normal, he skilfully performed the cleansing spell. His mind continued racing around the thought of having Hermione's skin touching his, the feel of her flesh under his dexterous hands, touching, exploring, and enticing her to the ultimate climax.

"I've got to get that witch out of my mind," he growled as he sat up fully and placed bare feet on the cool floor.

He eyed the still open book. The image was once again in the full throes of ecstasy when he waved his hand, forcefully slamming it shut. He ran his hands through his hair and sat there silently, thinking.

Why? How? When did she start affecting me that way? He ran his hands over his face and eyes, as if trying to wash away her image from his mind.

"Coffee," he decided aloud. He reached for the book, used the shrinking charm, and with it safely tucked in his breast pocket, he left his flat. As he returned to the Apparition point, he secretly hoped that he would see her again.

Severus reached the café and saw Marcus sitting in his favourite chair. *Typical*, he thought to himself as he pulled the café door open and entered.

Severus stalked up to the counter, passing the girl, Mykell, on his way. After what seemed an eternity to him, but had only been a moment or so, Severus turned around to face her and the boy she seemed to be training. Leaning back against the counter, crossing his arms over his chest and his ankles over one another, he sarcastically asked, "Today?"

Both employees turned around with shocked looks on their faces. Mykell began to apologize when Severus heard *her* voice.

"It's all right, Mike. I've got this one."

Severus turned around to see Hermione's smiling face. A smirk quickly replaced the ire on his face.

"Professor," she stated with laughter in her eyes.

"Miss Granger," he responded, amused.

"Hermione, remember?" she prompted.

"Ah, yes." He feigned innocence. "I do recall an *earlier* conversation about the permission you graciously granted me."

Hermione let out a soft laugh as a flush crept into her cheeks. "Yes, well ..." she began.

Severus just waved a hand as if to push the memory and her comments aside.

"All right then, Severus," she agreed. "What may I get for you this afternoon?"

"Coffee. Black."

Hermione looked around Severus as he turned to see the smiling faces of Mykell and Marcus. They had spoken in unison at Hermione's question. The other boy stood there, confused.

Severus scowled. Turning back to a surprised Hermione, he simply stated, "Coffee. Black."

"You've been here before?" she asked as she set about gathering his order.

"Yes. I've enjoyed their coffee almost every afternoon for the past month." Hermione's surprise was visible as he saw her fumble with the cup and saucer. "Why does that surprise you?" he asked and set his payment next to the till.

"I've just never seen you here before," she replied as she finished his order.

"I usually sit outside." He started to reply. He then cocked his head questioningly and said, "Come to think of it, I don't recall seeing you, either."

Hermione handed him his drink and pushed his payment back towards him. "It's on the house," she replied, but did not elaborate on his comment.

"Your boss would not appreciate your giving things away." He said this as he pushed the payment back toward her once more, still questioning her with his tone.

This time Severus saw her smile widen, but before she could speak, a crowd of women came in the front doors of the café.

"Have a seat, Severus," Hermione directed. "I have a break in a few minutes. We'll talk then." She dismissed him as she smiled at the women behind him. She could see them admiring the tall man before them.

Severus was not used to being pushed out of the way, but he knew she had a job to do. He turned around and was face to face with a horde of women.

"Ladies," he acknowledged and tried to pass. They stood, smiling at him, but would not move. He looked at each of them and caught the approving gaze of more than one as he pushed his way through, saying "excuse me" when needed.

He heard Hermione begin taking orders as he headed for the door. Remembering the book, he looked to the right and found a vacant alcove. *Perfect*, he thought as he found an empty table and took a seat. He was able to view her working through a gap in the drapery. He removed the book and returned it to its normal size. He idly caressed the book and set it on the table before him as he stared at her, remembering that he had heard her scream his name just moments before.

Severus saw Marcus look longingly at Hermione when she was not looking. He had also noticed that Hermione paid very little attention to her colleague other than to assist him when he began looking lost.

He may be a dunderhead, Severus thought, but he cannot be much younger than she is. Why is she not accepting his advances?

Severus recalled her last years at Hogwarts. She had never really had a serious relationship. Not that he had inquired on his own. No, Minerva was quite proud of Hermione. She would spout stories about the goings-on of her favourite student, whether she was provoked into conversation or not. It was never gossip, just a deep pride in her student's achievements. She was pleased that Hermione had not succumbed to the pressure of truly dating Ronald Weasley. Minerva had never made clear *why* she would not have chosen Weasley for Hermione, but Severus had his suspicions.

She was always too good for that boy, Severus thought as he continued to watch her work. She deserves someone who will challenge her intelligence

Someone like you, perhaps? His inner voice decided to butt in again.

"No," Severus growled under his breath, "not like me."

Just think about it, mate. Her picture reacted to you. Why wouldn't the real thing?

"Because!" Severus said loudly, startling a couple at the opposite side of the café. He glared at them until they moved out of sight.

Because nothing ... was all the voice was able to get out before a movement caught his eye. He covered the book's jacket expertly with his large hand as Mykell came into full view.

"Your coffee, sir." Mykell brought Severus his coffee and the usual sweet chocolate treat and set it on the table. She openly smiled at him, which caused him to look at her suspiciously as he raised the cup to his nose and inhaled. "Welcome back," she said as she turned and headed back to help at the counter.

Severus tipped the cup to her in response and took a sip. He began watching Hermione serve the women's group again. He sat motionless, save the occasional sip of coffee. He had not realised that his cup was empty until Mykell stood by him.

"Would you care for another cup?" she asked as he set the empty cup down.

"Please," Severus replied without looking away from Hermione.

Mykell glanced at his saucer. "You haven't touched your chocolate."

Severus turned his attention to the girl. "No. I suppose I haven't," he replied in a tone that made her smile fade.

Severus watched the girl retreat behind the counter and chat with Hermione, who began to laugh as she went to the sink and washed her hands. "I'll be back in a few minutes, Mike. Watch the counter for me, will you?"

"Sure thing, boss," Mykell replied and went back to work.

Severus saw Hermione move from behind the counter and walk towards his hideout. He quickly moved the book to the stool furthest from where she might sit and hoped that she did not choose to sit where it was hiding.

"The boss?" he asked Hermione as she poked her head into the alcove.

Hermione's face brightened with pride. "Yes. This," she gestured behind and around her, "is all mine."

"Well done," he complimented and raised his cup in a polite gesture.

"Why, Professor Snape, was that a compliment I just heard?" Hermione teased as she entered the alcove and took a seat opposite him.

"Do not get used to it." He smirked back at her.

"Not likely." Hermione laughed as she looked into his eyes. "So, tell me, why have you come in *almost* every day?"

Severus once again sensed her nervousness. "The bookstore." He nodded in the general direction of the store. "I was looking for a book. The shopkeeper had to order it."

"That explains the bookstore, but why here?" she prodded.

"Coffee. What else?" Severus stated, as if it should have occurred to her sooner.

"Oh. Right," Hermione answered.

She looks disappointed, he noticed internally. He sat looking at her, debating whether to tell her something else, anything, just to see her smile at him again, but he kept silent. *She does not need me to make her happy*, he decided.

"Has the book come in yet?" she asked somewhat distractedly.

"Yes. I just got it this morning," Severus answered, "shortly before we saw one another."

"Does that mean you won't be coming back?" Hermione asked, trying to sound professional.

Severus sat back and watched her for a moment before answering. "I had not thought about it."

Once again, he could see emotions cross her face. She had gone from playful and hopeful to somewhat shy and dejected.

They sat in silence for a moment before Hermione spoke. "Care for a game of chess?"

Severus raised a brow. "You actually play? And here I thought your life was all about *books*." His voice held a tinge of amusement, and he saw her flush.

"Yes, well, about that," Hermione started.

"Don't worry, Miss Granger. Your secret is safe with me." His eyes were shining with mirth.

"I'm never going to live this down, am I?" she asked hopelessly as she rose to get the chessboard.

"Not if I can help it." He chuckled.

A/N: I must thank sshg316 for reading this and helping me with minor errors. Please review after you read!

Friendship And Sweet Chocolate

Chapter 4 of 4

Their friendship grows over sweet chocolate and coffee.

Severus made several more trips to the café over the next few weeks. He and Hermione set up a ritual of chess playing and coffee drinking. They discussed his on-going Potions studies, books they had both read or would like to read, and differences in the varieties of coffee she had on hand.

One particular conversation captivated Severus' attention. To his surprise, he needed to coax her into talking about it.

"How long have you owned this place?" he asked.

"A year," Hermione replied vaguely as she moved her knight across the marbled board. "I like this much better than Wizard's Chess," she stated.

Severus contemplated his next move; the one that *did not* pertain to chess.

"You are changing the subject, Hermione," he said in a matter-of-fact tone as he moved his piece in turn.

"It's a very short story that would bore a man of your stature," Hermione teasingly retorted.

"Try me," he dared and raised a brow.

"Well, you know my mum and dad are dentists. Right?"

He nodded and she went on.

"Right. Well, during my years at Hogwarts, I learned the healing properties of chocolate." Hermione took a deep breath and continued. "I was never able to have sweets as a young girl. My parents just wouldn't allow it, but the medicinal benefits of chocolate far outweigh the negatives."

Severus could see her eyes well up with unshed tears.

"After the war, things just weren't the same," she whispered.

"You need not go on if it's upsetting." Severus spoke just above a whisper.

"No. I'll be fine." She dabbed her eyes with a cloth napkin and said, "As I said, things just weren't the same. I wanted to help more. Therefore, I went to school to become a chocolatière. I found that chocolate does not benefit only magical people. It actually has natural healing elements that benefit Muggles as well. The darker the chocolate is, the better, but I make a variety."

Severus saw her face lighten as she spoke of happier times. He picked up his chocolate treat. "You make these?" he asked.

"Oh yes!" She beamed. "I thought you knew."

"No," Severus answered. "How would I know?"

Hermione smiled at his sarcasm and took a long look at him before she spoke. "Sometimes, I forget that you used to be my professor, and then you come up with comments like that to remind me."

Severus was not sure how to take that, but decided to test her. He reached out and touched her hand. "Well, as you know," he emphasised, "things just aren't the same anymore."

He saw the surprise in her eyes, but he felt her hand turn and close around his.

"You're right," she agreed as she stood. "I'd better get back to work."

Detaining her by continuing to hold her hand, he asked, "Are you making sweets today?"

Smiling at him she said, "I am, actually. Would you like to watch?"

Severus almost choked on the mouthful of coffee he had just taken. A flash of Hermione naked, save for splashes of chocolate over her breasts and thighs, and pleasuring herself, entered his mind.

"Excuse me." He coughed and cleared his throat. "I would enjoy watching you work, Hermione."

"Fabulous!" she exclaimed as she gathered their dishes. "Follow me."

Severus Disapparated home and went to the bedroom. He set a box of finished sweets on the bedside table next to the enchanted book, removed his coat, and placed it neatly on a nearby chair. He had had a long day and needed a shower.

Standing under a stream of hot water, he reflected on his day.

He and Hermione had spent the afternoon making a variety of chocolate sweets and enjoying each other's company. They had lost track of time and were surprised when Marcus came in to tell Hermione that he had closed up for the night. Then, he offered to stay if she needed him.

Severus let out a laugh as he remembered the pointed look the prat had given him. Hermione just laughed and reassured Marcus that she was in good hands with her old professor.

Severus stiffened at the memory of being called "old."

"I will leave you to your young man then," he told Hermione as he gathered his coat.

Hermione grabbed a dishtowel and cleaned her hands. "I had hoped you'd stay and have dinner with me."

"I will not keep you from your friends any longer." He looked directly at Marcus, ignoring Hermione's sigh of frustration.

"All right, but please," she said as she handed him a green box wrapped with a silver bow, "please, take this with you."

She waited for him to take the sweets and then continued, "You worked hard on them. You ought to take some with you."

"Thank you, Miss Granger," Severus replied all too formally as he took the box. "Good night."

Severus finished his shower, dried off, and wrapped the towel around his waist. He returned to his bedroom and stared at the unopened box.

"Old. I do not stand a chance with her. She thinks I'm **old**," he said to the box as he ran his fingers through his damp hair.

That is not what she meant, and you know it, Severus his subconscious voice interjected.

"I know nothing of the sort," he argued.

Today was a fine day for you both. Do not ruin it by putting words into her mouth.

"Those *words* came out of her mouth. I did not put them there," he claimed.

What a pretty little mouth she has, too, his inner-voice teased.

Hermione's smiling face entered his mind. Her bottom lip was slightly swollen from being caught between her teeth. He could not remember if she had that habit in school,

but he could not get it out of his mind now. He remembered that the drawing of Hermione had bitten her lip just before calling his name.

Severus shivered and licked his own lips at the memory of her as he reached for the book and began thumbing through the pages. He passed the section where the illustrated Hermione was pleasing herself, the section pertaining to male masturbation, and idly skimmed *Daytime Fantasies ~ How to Have Them In Public Without Anyone Noticing*. His mind wandered to another of the day's events.

She finished making a batch of milk chocolate and mint squares and made a rather large mess in the process.

Severus sat back and observed. His enjoyment grew as he watched her hands meld the chocolate together into its fine and creamy state. She talked him into helping with the last part of the blending process and gave instruction by standing behind him while he sat at the counter's edge.

Hermione placed her hands on his shoulders and said, "You're doing all right except for one thing." She slid her hands from his shoulders, along the length of his arms, and took hold of his hands. "Like this," she said, close enough to his ear so that he felt her breath brush it. She began to move their hands together as one pair.

Severus felt his body heat and tighten as he imagined her touching him again.

She would not have touched you that way if she truly thought you too old the voice reminded him.

Severus ignored the argument as he sat on the bed, set the open book next to him, and stared at the shimmering silver bow-tied green box.

He closed his eyes and imagined Hermione dressed in a green silk dress with a narrow silver strap that graced the bodice, accentuated her breasts, and tied beautifully behind her slender neck.

Severus opened his eyes and found the box in his hands. He slowly pulled on the ends of the silver bow, sliding it gently off the corners of the box, and lifting its lid. The scent of heaven permeated his senses.

He took the box and book and positioned himself against the headboard. He moved his attention to the book and returned to the segment where he could see Hermione drawn across both pages. He reached into the open box where the sweets lay individually wrapped in green and silver foil. He unwrapped one and placed it in his mouth. It immediately melted on his tongue; he closed his eyes as the sensation ignited his desire and his mind continued to undress Hermione Granger.

He slid the silvery fabric from her neck and over her soft shoulders. Running his hands down the length of her arms as she had done to him, he placed gentle kisses on the nape of her neck and on each bared shoulder.

Severus groaned as he imagined Hermione reach behind herself and touch his growing erection. *She pressed her palm against him and then released his heat with a wordless charm.* He ate a piece of the chocolate mint and held another in his hand, ready to be devoured as he fixated on her. He could feel the soft cotton of the towel on his now sensitive skin. He imagined it as the silk of her dress brushing against him, and he raised his hips to increase the sensation. His free hand moved the towel aside to feel himself, skin on skin. He imagined her small soft hands caressing gently, tracing the pulsating veins along the lengthening shaft. Feeling a drip of wetness begin at the tip, he reached with his other hand, grasped himself firmly, and stroked downward.

It was then that Severus remembered the chocolate, which had melted in his hand. He sighed as he lifted his hand to display a creamy mess. At that moment, he could feel himself begin to tingle where chocolate had met sensitive skin.

Mint, he thought to himself as the sensation grew. It was a cool feeling that seemed to be enhancing his heat.

Severus glanced at the book drawing of Hermione. She was licking her fingers. "Finish what you started," the caption read.

And he did.

He reached down and used his chocolate-covered hand to envelop his hypersensitive casing. Each stroke became longer and deeper as the candy melted and absorbed into his skin. The mint enhanced the intense feeling tenfold.

Severus leant forward, propped himself up with his free arm, and released a deep breath as he imagined himself straddling Hermione and sliding his heat between her candy-covered breasts. His breath reached his mint-covered flesh, and Severus felt his body rock with renewed passion at the fresh sensation. It was as if smooth ice mixed with the heat in his fisted hand. His breathing ragged, movements quick, hips thrusting with each downward stroke brought quick release.

Severus lay back down and squeezed his eyes shut as the moment passed. He envisioned Hermione in the café, closing the door between them and leaving him outside on the pavement.

He was alone in life and in his dreams.

Severus ignored the posts she had written over the past two weeks, each asking if she or one of her employees had done something wrong. The most recent lay open on his sofa table.

Dear Severus,

I hope this finds you well and in good holiday spirits. We, my employees and I, close at noon on Christmas Eve. We are extending an invitation to you in hopes that you will join us in our afternoon festivities.

Please come.

Your friend,

Hermione

"She paid you well to wait for a reply, didn't she?" Severus spoke to the fawn-coloured owl perched on the edge of the table. It softly hooted in reply.

It has been a fortnight, Severus.

"Not nearly long enough," he argued with himself.

You will never get her out of your system this way the voice contended.

"I can try." Severus stared at the owl as he paced the floor.

Coffee, he thought and sighed loudly.

"Fine. I'll go," he conceded. "I'll go for the *coffee*."

You keep telling yourself that the voice inside dared.

Severus walked towards the café, turned back and walked to the Apparition point.

"You're here," he said aloud. "Just go see her."

Severus turned on his heel and marched to the café's door. As he reached for the handle, the door swung open and Hermione tumbled into his arms.

"Severus!" she exclaimed as he held her upright, yet firmly against him.

He looked down into her smiling face. "Going somewhere?" he asked with a scowl on his face.

"Yes!" She gently smoothed his coat with her hands. "I was coming to retrieve you."

"I replied to your last post," he pointed out as he released her. "Did you not believe me?"

"Yes," she laughed, "but Marcus saw you going back down the street. He said you looked like you had changed your mind."

"I did, at that," he admitted.

Hermione jovially placed her arm in the crook of his. "I'm happy you changed it back, then!" she said as she pulled him inside.

Severus and Hermione were playing a short game of chess when Mykell brought Hermione two large cups and set a carafe on the table. "Enjoy," she said and smiled happily at the couple.

Severus looked over the chess pieces and inquired, "What's with her today? She's too happy."

Hermione sat thinking for a moment. He could see her mulling over what to tell him. She obviously opted for the truth. "I told her that I had planned on seeing you today."

"And?" he prompted.

"And nothing." She stared at the board, considering her next move.

"Why would that make her happy?" he prodded further.

Hermione, giving up on the game, sat back in her chair and carefully watched her former professor.

"Because it's Christmas!" she stated sarcastically.

Severus moved the game aside and then leaned toward her with an amused look upon his face. He was sorely tempted to employ his Legilimency skill upon her, but thought better of it.

"Honestly?" she asked.

Severus nodded and could see her gather her Gryffindor courage as she straightened her spine and began to speak. "It made her happy because it made *me* happy." Hermione stared openly at him.

Severus hid the excitement he felt at her confession. He reached for his copy of the enchanted book, which he had wrapped in Christmas paper, and set it before her.

"Happy Christmas, Hermione," he said softly.

Smiling brightly, she took the gift and quickly unwrapped it. The look on her face became one of pure shock. She looked down at the book and then back up at him. "I already have this book, Severus."

"Yes, I know. However, you piqued my interest with your purchase that day," he replied as he reached and opened it to the chapter on self-pleasure for women. He noticed her glance down at the animated drawing.

"I made a slight modification in my copy," he stated.

"That's me," she said, astonished.

"I know," he replied as he stood to leave. He moved in behind the surprised woman, leaned into her, and inhaled her scent. Releasing a soft breath on her neck, he whispered, "It's better with chocolate."

~fin~