

# His Infamous Red Quill

by anogete

After catching Hermione reading a romance novel, Snape urges her to write her own and offers to edit it for her. He doesn't think she'll actually do it, though.

## Chapter 1

Chapter 1 of 9

After catching Hermione reading a romance novel, Snape urges her to write her own and offers to edit it for her. He doesn't think she'll actually do it, though.

*Author's Note: First, I want to thank moonrevel and JenF for being amazing people and helping me clean (but not of smut!) this story up. They don't know it, but they served as motivators to make me actually finish this when I felt like abandoning temporarily.*

*If you're looking for loads of character development or any plot beyond entangling Hermione and Severus in a relationship, then you're looking in the wrong place. This was just me indulging by writing what I wanted to write, nothing more. (Apparently, I wanted to write smut.) And, as with all the fics I post, it's finished. There are eight chapters, and I'll be posting them about once a week, perhaps a little more often if the queue isn't too backed up. Oh, and all feedback is appreciated!*

### Chapter 1

Although he never was one for soaking in the beauty of nature, Severus Snape found himself strolling along the shore of the lake next to Hogwarts. Spring had just arrived, chasing winter away with milder nights and longer days. Gathering his robes about him, he turned from the well-worn path around the lake and made his way toward the school. A small, dim light at the entrance caught his attention, and he pushed forward, planning on sending the student responsible back to his or her dormitory with at least thirty fewer points.

He smiled to himself. Before and during the war with the Dark Lord, he had deplored his job as a professor at Hogwarts. During the last year of the war, he was forced out of that position and sent on the run due to an unfortunate task appointed to him. Both he and Dumbledore had known the repercussions of Dumbledore's murder, but there had been no choice. Thankfully, evidence to the contrary, which Dumbledore had entrusted to Minerva McGonagall, was used to exonerate him of all charges after the final battle. Now, he had a new appreciation for teaching and his life at Hogwarts. It was stable, and, if he could ignore the especially stupid children, he actually enjoyed it somewhat. He especially enjoyed catching students out after curfew. The thrill of crushing their illicit little activities and deducting points never got old.

This time, for greater impact, Severus crept along the wall of the castle until he reached the front steps, using the stones as a shield from the student's prying eyes. When he was only a few yards away, he could make out long hair and small hands clutching a book. The light was emanating from the page. He narrowed his eyes and took several long strides to bring him in front of the perpetrator.

"Clearly, it is several hours after curfew, and I think..." Severus trailed off when the girl looked up to meet his eyes. Miss Granger. *Professor Granger*, he corrected himself. She pulled her wand out of the book and extinguished the dim glow coming from it.

"I'm not a student any longer, Professor Snape," she said with a small smile curling her lips up.

He shifted uncomfortably under her gaze. "And why, may I ask, are you sitting on the steps of the castle at this hour?"

"Well, I thought that much was obvious. I'm reading." She held up the paperback novel quickly and then placed it back in her lap. "Why are you out so late, Professor?"

"I don't believe that's any of your business, Miss Granger."

"I'm sorry I spoiled your fun. I know you were looking forward to deducting House points."

Sometimes she annoyed him, but most of the time he found her company tolerable. The war had taken a toll on Hermione Granger. Many of her close friends had found their ends shortly before and during the final battle. Minerva McGonagall had insisted on offering Hermione the position of Charms Professor before the next school term began. Severus had reservations until he saw Hermione's unbearably sad eyes just a week before classes resumed. He had to admit that for such a young woman, she had done quite well during these first months, especially considering that she had fought in a war just a few short months earlier.

"I suppose I shall live. I'll, no doubt, find a student on the walk back to my quarters," he replied, taking a seat beside her on the fifth step.

"I saw you walking around the lake. It's a beautiful night for a walk, isn't it?"

Severus nodded slowly, a small smirk pulling at the edges of his mouth. "I thought I was sneaking up on you."

She chuckled softly. He never knew a laugh could sound so cheerless and empty. "I definitely am ruining your fun tonight, aren't I? Perhaps I should have stayed in my chambers."

"And why aren't you in your chambers?"

Hermione shrugged and nervously ruffled the pages of her paperback novel. "I couldn't sleep. I thought the fresh air might help me."

"I have..."

"Potions. Yes, I know. I'm afraid I'll become too dependent on a potion to get a good night's sleep. I can't be running to you or asking for use of your laboratory every time I can't sleep."

"Poppy keeps a stock as well. You can ask her."

Hermione shook her head and lifted her eyes to the stars. "I'll be fine. I just needed to be outside. I just needed to see the sky."

Severus hated to admit it, but he was worried about Hermione. Despite performing admirably in the classroom, she seemed far too disconnected from the world. The look in her eyes was always sad and distant when he spoke to her in the staff meetings or in the halls. He sighed and dared a quick glimpse at her. She was staring at the back cover of the book in her lap.

"What are you reading tonight?"

Hermione's pale hand quickly slipped over the back of the novel. "Nothing," she mumbled quickly.

He tried to discern the text visible between her fingers, but the moon provided little light. "You cannot read nothing; it must be something."

She placed her other hand over the book. "It's just a Muggle novel."

"That's a rarity around here," he replied. "May I see it?" Severus extended his hand.

Hermione looked from his hand to his face. "You really wouldn't be interested. It's quite stupid, actually."

"Humor me, Miss Granger."

She shifted and slid the book to the far side of her lap. "I'd rather not, Professor Snape."

"Why?"

"You'll just make fun of me."

Severus met her eyes, and he recognized that anxiety and fear he knew all too well from his own days as a student at Hogwarts. She was afraid of being mocked by him. Severus usually enjoyed seeing that look of fear in others' eyes, if only to reassure him that he wasn't the only one to endure that pain. He didn't enjoy seeing it in *her* eyes, especially when he knew how much she had already lost. However, his curiosity was piqued even more by her reluctance to show him the novel. He couldn't simply drop the subject; he was far too curious.

"From one book enthusiast to another, I assure you that I will not mock your choice this evening."

A snort of laughter escaped when she turned to him again. "It's just a silly romance novel, Professor Snape." Hermione handed the book over to him. "I've read it before. I just brought it out here to amuse myself while I waited for sleep to come."

Severus turned the book over in his hands to look at the cover. The title was splashed across the top in loopy, torrid writing, while a picture of muscular man with a rose laid across him was below. The book was fairly thin, and he could feel several rough creases along the spine that proved she had read it more than once. "This is contraband in the hands of a student," he murmured, letting his thumb glide over the page edges.

"I'm not a student."

"True, but if one were to discover you had such a book in your possession, it is possible that someone could steal it from you."

Hermione sighed. "If you'd like to destroy it, then do so. I don't mind. It doesn't really matter to me anymore."

Severus curled his fingers tightly around the paperback. He desperately wanted to open it and read a passage, if only to satisfy some odd curiosity about what Hermione had been reading before he approached her. *She could have been reading about sex while you were watching her*, his mind supplied. The urge to open the book and read it right there was overwhelming. "Perhaps I'll just take this and burn it then, Miss Granger. It wouldn't do for a student to find a professor in possession of something so lascivious."

Hermione stood and turned toward him, nodding at Severus with a faint smile on her face. "I'm sure you're right. I think I'll turn in for the night. Goodnight, Professor Snape."

As she ascended the last few steps, he turned to watch her over his shoulder. Moments later, the large door to the castle thumped shut. Severus turned the book over in his hands, but decided to wait until he got back to his chambers to read any of it.

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*Marco trailed a hand down her lithe body to sensually fondle her nipples. Eliza arched up into his embrace.*

*As his strong hand continued down her writhing form, she moaned in anticipation. Moments later, he cupped her mound, feeling the evidence of her arousal. The sensation curled Eliza's toes.*

*Her hand desperately gripped Marco's shoulder as he plunged two fingers deep within her.*

Severus slammed the book closed and made a conscious effort to slow his breathing down. He shifted uncomfortably in his chair by the fireplace, his fingertips pressed tightly against the unassuming paperback novel. Looking down, he saw the obvious tent on the front of his trousers. *Hermione Granger was reading this before you interrupted her tonight. She was reading about throbbing flesh and fingers and writhing tongues. She was thinking about it when you approached her,* his mind repeated over and over again.

The thought made him uncomfortable, and when he opened the book again, he skipped two pages for good measure. The sexual words were gone, and daily activities filled the pages again. He resumed his reading just as the clock struck two in the morning. With the exception of innuendoes, the next several pages were relatively clean and humorous. It wasn't until he found himself near the middle of the novel that his heart softened over the kindness and intimacy between the two characters. He had yet to find actual intercourse, but the small touches and thoughtful gestures were getting under his skin. It was nearly as discomfoting as the descriptions of sexual acts.

He slammed the book closed a second time when he reached several pages filled with oral sex. Trying to will away his erection did no good. It pressed insistently against the fabric of his trousers in an almost painful way. Severus sat the book aside and unbuttoned his pants. Just as he wrapped his fingers around himself, he glanced at the cover of the book. It was mocking him. With a sigh of disgust, he quickly flipped the book over and turned back to the matter at hand.

His thoughts alarmed him as he grasped his shaft and firmly slid it in and out of a tight fist. His mind continued to return to Miss Granger and what her reaction to the novel might have been. Severus couldn't help but wonder if the words affected her as they did him. *Does she lie in her chambers at night and think of what is on those pages? Does she wish for someone to touch her as she bends her knees and slips a hand between her legs?*

Seconds after that thought, Severus clenched his teeth together and jerked within his hand. He fumbled for his wand and murmured a cleansing charm before walking toward his bedroom. He left the paperback with the garish red cover on his end table. If he brought it to bed with him, he would be tempted to read more, and he needed sleep before his classes tomorrow morning.

## Chapter 2

*Chapter 2 of 9*

After catching Hermione reading a romance novel, Snape urges her to write her own and offers to edit it for her. He doesn't think she'll actually do it, though.

### CHAPTER 2

Just after four o'clock in the morning, Hermione shot out of her bed, soaked in sweat. The dreams had been relentless this week. The worst recurring one was when she dreamt of holding Ron's lifeless body while Harry knowingly sacrificed himself to kill Voldemort. She always woke from that particular dream in a cold sweat with a sick stomach.

So many people...friends...had died in those bleak months after their graduation that she felt like she had somehow cheated death. The scar cutting across her shoulder reminded her that she hadn't come away unscathed, but it seemed such a small price to pay. *No*, she thought, *I've paid in more than just my scar. I've lost my friends. I've lost my parents. I've lost my life.*

She placed a hand on her shoulder. It tended to ache when the room became too chilly. The old castle was cold, and she could see a thin layer of frost on the grass outside, glistening in the early morning light. Spring was coming, but it hadn't quite arrived in full. A few gentle squeezes kept the dull ache at bay so she could slip out of bed and prepare for another day of classes.

Hermione winced as soon as she stepped into her tub. She had made a fool of herself in front of Severus Snape last night. She had allowed him to see the trashy romance novel she had toted outside with her, and, what was worse, she let him leave with it. Of course, he said he planned on burning it, destroying it in some way for the well-being of the students. However, she couldn't help but wonder if he had at least taken a peek at the contents.

She sat down in the comforting warmth of the water and slid her head below the surface. When she emerged, she brushed the droplets from her eyelashes and squeezed the excess water from her hair. It was a silly affair of a novel with a dash of romance. Basically, it was filled with things that Hermione knew she would never know or feel. It had been almost a year since that day, the day they had all died, Voldemort included. *Well, not everyone*, she amended. *I'm still here. A few others survived. But no one that I loved.*

The tears welled up in her eyes, threatening to spill over onto her flushed cheeks. Cry. It was all she did nowadays. She hated it. In anger, Hermione smacked a flat palm against the bathwater, splashing it on the bathmat as well as on herself. She had been crying for a year. Surely that was enough tears for a lifetime. She always wondered if she'd run out of tears. If she did, would she cry without them?

*Probably.* She sniffed and began scouring her body, leaving red skin in her wake.

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"Good morning, dear."

Minerva always made an effort to be especially kind to her. Sometimes it made Hermione want to scream. Instead, she forced a half-hearted smile. "Good morning."

"A bit cool this morning, isn't it?"

Hermione cast her former Head of House a glance and picked up a piece of toast. "Yes, it is."

She still found it odd to eat at the staff table in the Great Hall. It wasn't so long ago that she had been sitting with Harry and Ron at the Gryffindor table. Now, she had Minerva McGonagall on one side and Severus Snape on the other. He hadn't arrived yet, and Hermione hoped he would stay away long enough for her to finish the slice of toast and leave.

It wasn't that she didn't like her former Potions professor. Over the past few months, he had been surprisingly helpful and even nice at times. She was just still mortified over the incident the previous night. Hermione hoped he had tossed the book in the hearth as soon as he walked into his quarters. The dog-eared romance novel was certainly not the best way to make a lasting impression on a colleague whom she admired and respected.

*Speak of the devil.* Hermione sunk a bit further down in her stiff-backed chair when she felt the disturbance of air that could only be caused by Snape's swishing robes. A moment later, he was settled beside her and reaching for the jam. Without a word, she offered him the plate of toast.

"And how are you this morning, Severus?" Minerva asked, looking past Hermione.

"It's Friday, which means I'll be free of classes with our exceptionally dull dunderheads for the next two days. I suppose that's something." He smeared a healthy dose of dark red jam on his toast.

Minerva turned her nose up at him. "You're far too young to be so sour, Severus."

"Yes, and you've known me far too long to ask such inane questions before I've had my coffee, Minerva."

The Headmistress huffed in indignation and returned to her breakfast.

Hermione picked the crust from her toast and arranged it on her empty plate in silence. Finally, Severus spoke up. "Did you sleep well last night?"

"Fine," she said softly.

"You're an atrocious liar, Granger. You look like you're two seconds from passing out in your tea."

"I'll manage," Hermione assured him before taking a sip from her cup. The bitter taste always woke her faster than anything else. Except for the dreams. "I trust you were able to dispose of that contraband you found yourself in possession of last night?"

"You may rest assured that it won't fall into the wrong hands."

Hermione felt her stomach drop. "Please tell me you didn't read any of it."

He placed a dollop of jam on another piece of toast. "And what if I did?"

She pushed the plate of uneaten toast away from her. "I'll die of embarrassment."

Snape finally looked at her, taking in her pale complexion and the dark circles under her eyes. "You look well enough to me. A bit exhausted, but nothing life-threatening."

She bristled under his gaze. "You read it? How dare you invade my privacy like that?"

"Keep your tone down or you'll have to explain to Minerva why you're so upset."

It took a great deal of effort, but Hermione bit her tongue and lowered her voice. "I trusted you to burn it, not take it back to your chambers to read it."

"I was curious."

"It was a ridiculous Muggle romance," she hissed. "It's hardly anything to be curious about. Every bookstore has a wealth of them."

Severus shrugged. "I was under the impression your tastes leaned more toward the academic realm. I must admit, I was surprised to find you were perusing such a shameless tale."

"Don't read into any deeper motivations of mine, Professor. It was just to pass the time." Hermione stood and left the Great Hall to prepare for her first lesson of the day.

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She was in the midst of marking some atrocious fourth-year essays when she heard rapping at the door to her private quarters. As horrible as the essays were, she didn't appreciate interruptions while she was marking. *I believe I've spent too much time around Snape. I'm starting to think just like him,* she mused.

She had to admit, Severus Snape still intimidated her a bit. Not as much as when she had been his student, but enough to keep her on her guard whenever he was in the room. Despite growing up around the man, she still couldn't understand him completely. Hermione doubted anyone knew what occupied Hogwarts' dour Potions master's mind. That didn't stop her from wondering, though.

Laying down her quill, she stood up to answer the door just as the knocking began anew. Deftly, Hermione dismantled her minor wards and opened the door to find exactly the person she had been contemplating.

"Professor Snape. Hello."

"*Professor* Granger." He nodded in acknowledgement.

"What can I do for you?"

Snape glanced behind him. "Common courtesy does dictate that one should invite visitors inside."

Hermione was still terribly embarrassed over the ordeal with the novel he had taken from her. She knew without a doubt that he had, at the very least, thumbed through the tattered copy, looking for ammunition with which to tease her. It raised her ire. "I can't imagine any business you would have with me that would require us to sit and have a cup of tea. Do you need me to cover your patrols this evening? If so, I'd be happy to."

He shifted and looked at her with unconcealed annoyance. "And I'd be happy to discuss your personal business out here in the hall, as well," he replied, producing her novel from a fold in his robes.

Cringing, she stepped aside and let him enter before closing the door behind him. "You said you were going to burn it." She turned around to find herself staring at his broad back.

"Curiosity and all, Granger. I've brought it back to you. There's no reason to burn it when you're more protective of your books than your gold. I doubt any of these books would ever unwittingly fall into student hands." He walked over to the far wall. It was lined with bookshelves floor to ceiling. "Where shall I put it?"

*Oh, no,* Hermione thought. She hurried across the room to move between Snape and her bookshelves. He was within an arm's reach of the rest of her romance novels. Truthfully, she only had a handful, no more than twenty. Compared to the rest of her collection, it was a minimal amount. However, Severus Snape would be more than happy to hold the knowledge over her head for years if he discovered she had read more than one.

"I'll take that," she said, plucking the book from his hand.

"So eager to get it back, Miss Granger?" He smirked. "Were you missing Marco and his pulsating manhood?"

Hermione flushed a deep shade of red. "Don't be such a prat, Snape," she muttered, shoving the book on a shelf.

"You wouldn't be attempting to hide something from me, would you?" Snape peered over her shoulder, scanning the spines of the books behind her.

"Don't be ridiculous. I was just returning the book you *stole* to my collection."

She should have known she was done for when Snape's eyes gleamed with malicious mischief. "What, pray tell, is *Sex Slave*? That wouldn't happen to be the title of the book just over your left shoulder, would it?"

Spinning around, Hermione saw the bold red writing along the stark white spine of the novel. She fumbled for an explanation that would appease him, but she was at a loss.

"Well, well," Snape murmured, stepping closer. "It looks as if it is in good company. *Hot Bodies? Passion's Embrace?* Does our very own Professor Granger have a predilection for these naughty little tales of sex?"

She had no response. Instead, Hermione pushed past him. Her face was still flushed with color when he turned around to face her again.

"Don't be such a juvenile, Snape. They're just romance novels. Molly Weasley has far more than I ever will. I don't see why you're making such a fuss over it."

He was looking far too pleased with himself as he shrugged and crossed the room to stand in front of her. "I just never thought you were the type."

"Type? I'm not any type. I have well over sixty books on Charms and nearly as many on Potions, not mention nearly six hundred pieces of literature. Are you really so intent on classifying me with less than twenty silly romance novels, half of which I think are horribly written?" Hermione pushed her hair back from her face. It seemed that each time she worked herself up into a snit, her hair made her look like a fool by flying about wildly.

Snape raised his brows and waited for her to finish. When she stopped and took a deep breath, he asked, "Do you have a favorite?"

"What?"

"A favorite. You said you thought half of them were horribly written. Which one do you consider to be the best?"

Hermione laughed at the absurdity of the situation. "Are you looking for book recommendations, Professor?"

He gave her a slight smile. "Perhaps. You know I've gone through all of the books the Hogwarts library has to offer. Branching out into more... risqué genres might do me well."

His response made her laugh so hard her shoulder began aching. She gasped for air and clamped a hand over her collarbone. She hadn't laughed so deeply in months not since before Harry and Ron were killed with so many of her other friends. Life just hadn't seemed very humorous after that horrible day. However, Snape asking her for suggestions on well-written erotica was just too much.

When she finally gained control of herself again, she looked up to see he was smiling at her. By common standards, it was a very small smile, but it was a smile nonetheless. It lightened her heart to know that despite all that had transpired in the past year, she could still enjoy a good laugh. It also hurt to know that laugh would never again be with Harry or Ron.

"They're all much too sappy for you, Professor," she finally replied.

He affected a look of hurt. "What do you take me for? Some brute who can only find pleasure in crude descriptions with pictures?"

"You just don't strike me as the type to enjoy romance."

"Well," Severus said, looking up at the ceiling for a moment before continuing, "yes, point taken. I'm no Lockhart."

Hermione huffed and sat down in the closest armchair. "Lockhart wasn't a romantic. He was, at best, a narcissist, and, at worst, a fraud."

"True..." he trailed off before walking toward the door.

After a long moment of silence, Hermione spoke up. "Did you really read that novel?"

"Truthfully?"

"Truthfully."

Snape smirked. "Portions of it. I found it complimented the sixth-years' essays I read today."

Hermione raised her brow in question.

"The author's descriptions of sex were on par with my students' descriptions of the many uses of bicorn horn."

"Both abysmal?"

"Quite," Snape agreed with an upward turn of his thin lips. "While I appreciate your offer to patrol the halls in my absence this evening, it won't be necessary. I believe Gryffindor is up over seventy-five points. I plan on lowering that lead this evening. Spring is just around the corner, and I have no doubt amorous couples are already sneaking about my halls."

He strode over to the door, opened it, and turned around to nod at her. "Good evening, Professor Granger."

She smiled at him. "Good evening, sir."

*Author's Note: A huge thank you goes out to moonrevel and JenF for being wonderful betas. And, I also want to thank all the wonderful people who have left reviews of encouragement. I appreciate it greatly.*

# Chapter 3

## Chapter 3 of 9

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### CHAPTER 3

Hermione Granger was not at Hogwarts, but Severus had a very good idea where she would be on a sunny Saturday morning. While most of the students and professors were enjoying the warm spring day by the lake or on the lush grounds of the school, Hermione was in a bookstore, Flourish and Blotts, to be exact. He didn't find the sight of her familiar brown hair in front of the bookshelves to be at all surprising when he stepped inside the shop to pick up his latest specially ordered Potions encyclopedia. He doubted she had ever enjoyed an unseasonably warm spring day without a book in front of her face. And, oddly enough, the thought endeared Hermione to him more than he would have liked.

Severus stepped forward to peer over her shoulder. *Malicious Magic: How to Cope When It Takes One You Love and Moving On: A Guide to Accepting the Past and Enjoying the Present With Ten Easy Spells* were just two of the titles on the bookshelf she was perusing. Severus frowned. He knew she was still upset over the deaths of her parents, Potter, and Weasley, not to mention a myriad of other friends during the war. However, he had no idea she was distraught enough to run to these self-help books.

"I always find that a good Dreamless Sleep potion works better than these books," he intoned softly.

Hermione whirled around to face him, obviously startled by his presence. "Professor Snape! I didn't know you were here."

"I'm picking up a book I ordered several weeks ago."

"I'm..." Hermione trailed off and gestured half-heartedly at the bookshelf.

He nodded. "Yes, well, like I said, I find that denial and a healthy dose of Dreamless Sleep works much better than building character and working through issues."

Hermione smiled before breaking into a hearty laugh. When her giggles subsided, she looked at him with shining eyes. "Thank you for that."

Severus shifted under the intensity of her gaze, annoyed that making her smile meant so much to him. He tried to blame his behavior on the novel he had found her with two nights ago. While he had felt a semblance of pity for her before then, it wasn't until the incident on the entry stairs that he had begun desiring her friendship. *Perhaps even more than that*, Severus thought, watching her brush a lock of hair from her cheek. It wasn't every day that he interrupted an attractive young witch with a sexy novel perched in her lap.

Finally, Hermione sobered up and cleared her throat. "I think I should probably skip the self-help section and just get that new reference guide to frog entrails. I'm sure it will put me to sleep in a snap."

"Perhaps that would be for the best." He motioned toward the front of the store with a nod of his head.

She joined him, and they both strolled toward the door. For such a beautiful day, the shop certainly was busy. He noticed a knot of women bustling around a new display by the entrance. Severus snorted. "What are they about?"

Breaking away from him, Hermione ventured over to the display, reached over a short witch's head, and plucked one of the books from the stack. Moments later, she returned to him with a somewhat sheepish look on her face. "It's Des'ree Derringer's new novel," she explained, handing the hardback book to her former professor.

Severus glanced down at the cover. A shirtless wizard was passionately kissing a buxom witch while his arm was thrown out behind him, pointing a wand at an unseen enemy. "Well, perhaps you should get this to add to your... collection."

Hermione's face flushed a becoming shade of red. "No, thanks. But, since you are so interested in the genre, you may want to purchase it."

He chuckled and flipped the book over in his hand. Besides Albus, Severus was hard-pressed to remember the last time someone felt at ease enough to joke with him. "I don't believe I'll purchase it, but, judging by the gaggle of witches over there, I'm sure it would be a lucrative genre to write in."

"Definitely more lucrative than Potions," Hermione agreed.

"Or any academic area, for that matter."

"True." Hermione laughed lightly. "Perhaps I should try my hand at it. I'll never be able to fund my own research with just my salary as a professor at Hogwarts."

Severus knew her words were in jest, but he couldn't help the surge of excitement that washed through him at the very mention of Hermione relating sexual encounters in her own words. He wondered if it would be as wordy and flowing as the essays she wrote during her time as a student. Perhaps it would be *too* detailed, like her academic writing. Severus bit his tongue trying to hide a smile when he thought of her twelve-inch parchment description of her hero's nine-inch penis. "Seeing as how you excel at anything you put your mind to, perhaps you should."

He watched as her cheeks colored to an even darker red. "As much as I'd like to knock Des'ree Derringer off her throne, I don't think romance novels are quite my strong suit. I believe I'll stick to my more academic undertakings."

"Just imagine the Galleons you'd receive for such a bestseller."

She smiled at him. "If I ever do write something, I'll be sure to let you mark it up with that infamous red quill of yours, Professor."

Severus nearly swallowed his tongue. He had very little experience with young women, but her teasing comment had come across in a flirtatious manner. It excited him and made him nervous. He knew he'd spend his evening lying in bed with this interaction replaying in his mind, wondering what sort of wanton little tale Hermione Granger would write if she indeed wrote one. She wouldn't do it, he was sure, and even if she did, he'd never have the pleasure of marking it like he marked her overachieving essays all those years, but that didn't stop him from wishing.

"By all means, Granger," he finally replied in a dry voice. "I'd love the chance to wield my *infamous red quill* in the pursuit of your salacious literary glory."

She laughed at him again, turning her eyes up to look him fully in the face. "I'm glad you have a sense of humor, Professor. It seems you've been the only one to make me laugh recently."

He looked down his nose at her, affecting a look of disdain. "Oh, so I'm amusing to you now?"

"Very," she replied, biting her lower lip to keep a smile from spreading.

"There goes my reputation." He nodded at her before turning to exit the store.

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Hermione wearily leaned against the rough, stone wall and removed her shoe. She gave her aching foot a few quick squeezes before replacing the high-heeled shoe. Thankfully, the corridor was empty, and all the students were making their way toward the Great Hall for dinner. She knew the shoes were a mistake by the time she finished her first class, but the day had been so busy that she'd yet to find time to return to her room for a more comfortable pair.

Actually, the entire week had been tiresome and unending. Nightmares had plagued her dreams each night, and the lack of sleep didn't help her patience with the more difficult students. Today, especially, had been far too long and tiring.

Returning to her quarters for the evening held no comfort when she knew it would be spent worrying over whether she would be able to sleep and feeling completely alone in the void of her life. Minerva meant well, but Hermione disliked her tendency to all but force the conversation back to the events after graduation. Sometimes she just wanted to talk about anything but the people who had died.

Severus Snape was someone she'd enjoy talking to, spending more time with, but he was inaccessible. She wasn't sure how to approach him and ask if he'd like to have a cup of tea in her chambers after dinner. It was just too awkward, and despite his amiable behavior recently, Hermione wasn't sure if he'd even find such an offer agreeable. They hadn't spoken much since their impromptu meeting in Flourish and Blotts the previous week. Hermione found she missed his company more than she thought possible.

Blowing a strand of hair out of her face, she shoved her foot back into the shoe and started toward the Great Hall.

Dinner was well underway when Hermione arrived and slipped into her chair between Snape and Minerva. She was hungry, but nothing on the table looked appetizing in the least. After several long seconds of debating whether she should just get up and leave, she pulled a small bowl of soup in front of her. Hermione could feel Snape's eyes on her, but she tried to ignore him. Since the book incident, he had a tendency to make her feel awkward and embarrassed by just looking at her.

She swirled the spoon in the broth of the soup and stared at the rest of the food on the table.

"Eat something, dear. You look like you could use it," Minerva said, giving her a worried look.

Hermione felt like sinking into her seat and hiding under the table. She hated eating at the staff table on the raised platform where all the students could easily see her sulking over her meal. "I'm not really hungry," she finally replied, pushing the bowl away and picking up a piece of crusty bread.

Minerva frowned, letting her gaze linger on Hermione, as if she wanted to force her former student to eat something. Deciding against that course of action, the Headmistress turned back to her own plate.

"Have you begun it yet?"

Hermione glanced over at Snape and raised her brows in question. "Begun what?"

A faint smile was pulling at the edges of his thin mouth. "The novel."

Cursing herself for blushing in front of him *again*, she shook her head in an emphatic no. "I couldn't possibly. I know Potions; I know Charms; I don't know romance."

"I'm sure you could use your imagination." He dabbed his lips and placed his linen napkin on top of his half-empty plate.

She wasn't sure how he made her feel at ease and embarrassed at the same time. It was just nice to talk to someone who didn't want to rehash the events that led up to Harry's and Ron's deaths. She didn't want to heal; she didn't even think it was possible. Verbal sparring with Snape about her dubious taste in reading material was a welcome change to the hesitant conversations with all the other professors in which they all walked on eggshells, afraid they would damage her further.

Hermione shrugged and popped a piece of bread into her mouth. It was still warm, and it tasted better than she thought it would. "I don't think I'll be adding romance author to my list of titles," she replied dryly.

"Pity," he said, standing up and gathering his robes. "How will you fund your personal research then?"

She didn't have the chance to respond before he swept away and exited through the door behind the staff table. Her stomach was fluttering, but she didn't think it was hunger. Hastily eating the piece of bread in her hand, she stood and excused herself from dinner.

Hermione took her time walking back to her chambers, knowing that she'd spend the rest of the night alone and feeling sorry for herself because of it. Snape's persistence over the silly notion of her actually penning a romance novel was slowly making its way under her skin. Hermione shut the door to her rooms behind her and laughed softly to herself. *Maybe I could write one*, she mused, sitting down at her desk. He was right; it would be an excellent way to make some additional money for research purposes, especially since she had been itching to experiment with using potions and charms in tandem. Potions ingredients were expensive, especially if one desired high quality ones.

Pulling a blank parchment to her, she tapped a dry quill against it. Nothing. She had no ideas, no inspiration. Who was she kidding? She couldn't write a romance novel. A pile of first-year essays was sitting on the corner of her desk. She really didn't want to read any of them.

Instead of delving into the pile of parchments to be marked, she stood up and walked over to the wall of bookshelves behind her desk. The single shelf with the romance novels Snape had so easily found several days before stood out in stark contrast to everything else. Sighing to herself, she ran a finger along the spines, finally pulling out one at random. Like all the others, she had already read it, but it would get her mind off the loneliness of her solemn rooms.

A few minutes later, Hermione found herself striding across the lush lawn of Hogwarts. The dim moonlight reflecting off the dark lake was beautiful. She settled herself on a patch of grass just shy of the shore and opened the novel. She had bought it at a Muggle used bookstore, and it smelled glorious. The musty scent of old books always made Hermione feel better.

She was only three chapters into the novel when the soft sound of footsteps across the lawn caught her attention. Old habits die hard, and Hermione found her wand in her hand before she even consciously thought to pull it out. Twisting in her seated position, she saw Snape walking toward her, his robes forgotten and only an austere black frock coat in their place.

"Professor," she acknowledged, slipping her wand away.

"Miss Granger," he replied, nodding at her. "Curfew is only fifteen minutes away. Setting a bad example for the students, are we?" Hermione had noticed his tendency to

switch back and forth between calling her Professor and Miss. She suspected he used the Miss when he wanted to tease or berate her. She hoped he was teasing this time.

She smiled up at him. If anyone had told her two years ago that Severus Snape would be the only person in the world who could make her smile, she would have laughed in their faces. "I was just getting some fresh air after a hard day of classes."

"The children are exceptionally stupid this year," he commented, lowering himself to the ground beside her. He stretched his long legs out in front of him, the heels of his boots digging into the edge of sand along the lakeshore. Propping himself up on arms thrown out behind him, he glanced over at the book in her hands. "Are you reading another piece of erotic fiction, Professor Granger?"

"I'm gathering information for that book you insist I write."

Snape's brows lifted fractionally. "Oh? I was under the impression that information gathering for such a novel involved more physical activity."

Hermione felt her face flush and her heartbeat speed up. She dropped her eyes to the book in her hands, turning it over to hide the ridiculous cover. "I've always been one for learning from books." Careful not to touch him, she stood and looked down at his upturned face. "I should go. I have to patrol the corridors tonight." Before she began the walk back up to the doors of the old castle, she turned back to him. "Goodnight, Professor."

Snape nodded. "Goodnight, Professor," he replied, turning his eyes to look out over the quiet lake.

*Author's Note: A huge, huge thank you to moonrevel and JenF for their invaluable assistance as betas. Also, thank you to the cute tech-y guy who installed the new server in our office and got the computers back up and running with internet. What would I do all day if I couldn't go online at work?*

## Chapter 4

*Chapter 4 of 9*

After catching Hermione reading a romance novel, Snape urges her to write her own and offers to edit it for her. He doesn't think she'll actually do it, though.

### CHAPTER 4

He wasn't necessarily looking for Miss Granger, but Severus did find himself strolling through the towering shelves of books in the library where he thought she might be hiding. Spending time with her had become more enjoyable than he cared to admit to anyone, even himself. So, he tried to hide his pleasure when he saw her seated at a small table underneath one of the tall, narrow windows toward the back of the massive library.

Severus watched her as she worried her bottom lip with her teeth and pushed her hair back before bending over the parchment in front of her. Nearly all of the children were tucked away in their common rooms because curfew was only minutes away. The library was very quiet, and he could hear the steady scratching of her quill against the parchment.

Taking his time, he approached her from the side. She was so intent on her work that she didn't hear him until he was already upon her, leaning over and glancing at her writings. When Hermione realized someone was watching, she slammed her hand over the parchment and gasped, "Professor."

Severus smirked. "What are you writing, Granger?"

"Nothing," she mumbled, turning the parchment over to hide it from his curious eyes. "I was just... writing a shopping list."

He raised a single brow and looked down his crooked nose at a very nervous Hermione Granger. "Oh, indeed?"

Composing herself, Hermione threw her hair over her shoulder. "Yes, indeed."

"Pity. I thought you were writing that novel we spoke about. You did tell me last night that you were researching ideas for it."

Hermione scoffed. "I am *not* writing a romance novel, Professor Snape."

"Then turn over the parchment."

"No."

Severus raised both brows at her this time. "No?"

By now, her face was flushed bright red. "No, I'm not going to play these little mind games with you," she said, lowering her voice. "What is on the parchment is none of your business."

His only reply was a condescending look and a smirk that told her he knew better.

"Besides," Hermione continued, "I wouldn't know where to even begin to write a romance novel. I've already told you as much."

With her skill at writing, her attention to detail, and her tendency to turn into a little firecracker when cornered, he had no doubts as to her ability to pen a reasonably well-written sex scene, provided she had a bit of experience in such matters. After dating Ronald Weasley, Severus doubted Hermione had managed to deter the Weasley family's rampant procreation hormones for that long. And while he doubted Mr. Weasley had been any sort of Casanova or expert in the sack, he was sure Hermione had to have at least enjoyed some part of it.

Severus shook the thoughts from his head. He *did not* want to think about Granger having sex with the late Ronald Weasley. The boy was nothing but trouble during his school career. Instead, he wanted to think about himself and Hermione tangled beneath his bed sheets. That line of thought could only get him into trouble, though. He wasn't confident his heavy robes could hide the raging erection he would undoubtedly find himself with if he imagined how it would be between them. It had been far too long since he had been with a woman.

However, Severus couldn't help but tease her further. "Perhaps you just need a bit of inspiration, Professor," he said with a mischievous smirk.



Severus had expected her to embarrass further, but she surprised him when she simply laughed. Her giggles and the light dancing in her eyes made his smirk slip into an actual smile.

After a moment of watching each other, Severus nodded at her. "I have halls to patrol and children to terrify."

He heard her tell him goodbye as he turned the corner of the closest aisle. He was not scheduled to patrol the halls this evening, but he thought a quick stroll through the main corridors would do him well. If he were to go back to his rooms now, his thoughts would undoubtedly stray to Hermione straddling his hips. His favorite chair would be large enough to allow her to do such a thing while he leaned back and watched her uncover that body she hid so well under those damned robes.

Teasing her was enjoyable, but he seriously doubted things would ever progress to the point where his fantasies would be indulged in quite such an explicit manner. His only hope would be to goad her into writing something he could read. Just the thought of reading what wanton sexual scenario she imagined while alone in her bed was enough to quicken his steps back to his private rooms.

Perhaps a cold shower would do him some good.

Hermione had never participated much in the girl talk of her female classmates. They would giggle and discuss boys, clothing, and social functions with great glee. She never saw the point in it all, preferring to study. In hindsight, she thought her avoidance of the girlish discussions may have been because she and boys did not go well together. The only one she had ever shown real interest in was Ron, and their relationship was odd at best.

However, she found herself lying in her bed, staring at the ceiling, and wishing she had someone to talk to about Severus Snape. He had dropped all of the insults and sneering remarks as soon as she began her first day as a staff member at Hogwarts. At the time, Hermione assumed it had been because she was a colleague of his or because Voldemort's reign of terror had finally ended, freeing him to behave as he had always wanted to behave. It had been a relief to her that she wouldn't have to dodge his acid tongue at every pass; she had had enough upsetting things on her mind.

Now, she got the distinct impression he was flirting with her, which her more sensible side thought was absolutely absurd. Severus Snape did not flirt with anyone, especially her. Despite that, she still couldn't shake the thought that after the first night he caught her with the romance novel on the steps of the school, his behavior toward her had shifted somewhat. She just wasn't sure how it had shifted.

Hermione had to admit that his warming to her over the previous two weeks inspired a bit of a crush on him. It certainly wasn't love, but perhaps more a sense of affection toward him. He had been so kind to her, intentionally making her laugh when she had thought it wasn't possible and taking her mind off the morbid things that had occupied it for months. Beyond that, she couldn't deny the power of his voice and the smirks he threw at her when she was least expecting it. Thinking of him made her stomach flutter.

He certainly wasn't a traditionally handsome man with his pale skin, lanky body, lackluster hair, and crooked nose, but ~~he~~was very interesting. No one could deny his intellect and sharp wit or the air of mystery surrounding him. If he were more attractive, he would be the perfect dark hero for one of those silly romance novels she read from time to time.

Hermione giggled and turned her face into the pillow. Severus Snape as a leading man in a romance novel? What a novel that would be. He would verbally flay the headstrong heroine with his tongue before he snogged her senseless. Hermione wondered if he would be the type to ravenously take her against one of the dungeon walls or if he would tease her into his bed with promises of pleasure. Perhaps a bit of both?

Imagining Severus Snape forcibly pushing her against a wall in a dark corridor and ripping her robes off excited her. He would be eager at first, she was sure. She had never seen him with a date or away from the school long enough to involve himself in secret affairs with nameless witches, so Hermione could only assume he didn't spend much time seducing women. Not that she thought he'd have any problem with it when he had that silky voice at his disposal.

So, he would be eager and passionate. He would slide his hands beneath her robes and touch her center, stroking the wetness he found there. Hermione shifted in her bed, pressing her legs tightly together to ease the ache. The pressure didn't help, and her thoughts of Snape didn't subside.

Perhaps he would nibble at her neck and breathe heavily into her ear as he unbuttoned his trousers, revealing his heated shaft. She bit her lower lip until it hurt, sliding a hand between her legs to cup herself. The warmth of her palm excited her even more. Before she realized what she was doing, Hermione had hiked her nightgown up and slipped a hand inside her knickers.

Yes, Severus Snape would make a wonderful leading man in a romance novel. Just the thought of him taking her against one of the walls in his dungeon quarters was enough to soak her undergarments and drench the questing fingers of her right hand as they dipped inside her. She arched her back and pressed her head into the plush pillow when her thumb brushed against her swollen clitoris.

She thought he would also whisper things in her ear with that delicious voice of his, detailing how much he wanted to fuck her before he pushed inside without warning. She moaned aloud and quickened the movements of her hand, slipping the other hand down to spread herself. Hermione closed her eyes tightly and thought of how hard he would take her while his tongue pierced her lips and claimed her mouth. Her body would rock against the rough stones each time he pressed into her.

Hermione nearly bit through her tongue trying to stifle the scream announcing her orgasm when it finally arrived, welling up from her groin and washing over the rest of her body all the way to her curled toes. Her chest was heaving from labored breaths, and both her hands were still trapped beneath the cotton fabric of her knickers. Her face burned from the flush of the first release she'd had in months.

She hadn't thought of anyone in that way since the day Ron and Harry had been taken from her. Things just hadn't been the same afterward, and finding such base pleasure seemed trite and disrespectful to the boyfriend she had lost in the war with Voldemort. However, Hermione couldn't deny the thrill she got from imagining Snape, her former professor, in such a compromising position, with her no less.

She slipped out of bed and padded into the bathroom, vowing to use her fantasy of Snape as inspiration for the beginnings of that romance novel he had been teasing her about. Despite her earlier denial, she *had* been trying to write something in the library, but she had ended up crumpling it and tossing it out as soon as Snape had disappeared around the corner. This time she thought she might have a leading man worth writing about, even if it was only to exorcise the rampant thoughts of lust. Severus Snape was beginning to inspire in her.

Severus didn't want to admit it, but he had spent the weekend casually searching for the newest addition to the Hogwarts staff. However, after looking in what he believed were all her favorite places, he still hadn't found Hermione Granger. The last time they spoke was Friday evening in the library when he teased her about what might be the beginnings of her romance novel.

It was Monday morning, and he arrived for breakfast several minutes earlier than usual, hoping to find her at the staff table. He crossed the Great Hall in long strides when he saw Hermione at her customary spot beside Minerva. When he finally took his seat, he saw she was actually eating this morning. He had been paying attention to her in some way or another since she began teaching Charms, and he had rarely seen her with much of an appetite in the mornings.

"Good morning, Professor Granger," he said, picking up a hot cup of coffee from beside his plate.

"Good morning, sir."

He shook the folds of his linen napkin out and laid it in his lap. "I didn't see you this weekend. Did you have exciting plans away from the castle grounds?" he asked, trying to sound nonchalant and uninterested.

She poked at the remaining food on her plate. "No, I was just catching up on some work in my rooms."

Something wasn't right. Most mornings she was sullen and despondent, trying to remove herself from any conversations around her. Now, she appeared nervous and uneasy. He wondered what she was trying to hide, because it was obvious Hermione Granger had a secret.

Severus narrowed his eyes when he remembered the novel. He was almost certain she had been working on it that day in the library; she just didn't want him to know. Perhaps she had spent her weekend locked away in her rooms writing deliciously sinful sex scenes. His hand clenched tightly into the napkin at just the thought of it.

"How is the novel coming along?" he asked, spreading some butter on his toast.

"Quite well," she replied before slapping a hand over her mouth, her eyes suddenly round and staring at him in shock. "I mean," she amended, "I have no idea what you're talking about. I'm not writing a novel."

He took a moment to gloat in silence, peering down at her mortified features for several seconds. "Like I've said before, you're an atrocious liar, Granger."

Hermione lowered her voice and leaned closer to him. "Listen, I'd really appreciate it if you didn't let this little bit of information get out. I know how you just love to embarrass people, but... if the students found out that I'm... you know, writing stuff of *that* nature..." Her face was terribly red, enough to catch Minerva's attention. Severus shifted his eyes back to his food while the Headmistress asked Hermione if she was feeling well.

"I'm fine," Hermione answered, shoving an entire piece of toast in her mouth.

Severus wanted to laugh at her embarrassment and bulging cheeks, but he couldn't have the students witnessing their feared Potions master having a bit of fun with the Charms professor.

"So," he said after Minerva had turned back to her plate of food, "shall I clear my schedule to proofread this nonexistent novel?"

She shook her head firmly. "Oh, no, it's absolutely ridiculous, and I'm not going to let anyone read it."

"Come now, Miss Granger, you've always been so very boastful of your accomplishments. Surely you feel the need to share this one with someone. And seeing as how I'm the only person who knows you're writing, I imagine I'm the obvious choice."

"You can't be serious," Hermione mumbled around her eggs.

Severus smirked again. She was so nervous she was shoving food haphazardly in her mouth. "Oh, but I am quite serious."

Hermione swallowed her food, took a gulp of orange juice, and abruptly stood. "No," she said, her voice firm, brooking no argument from him.

Severus watched her leave the Great Hall from the corner of his eye, her heels clicking on the stone floor. She certainly was feisty when someone riled her up.

He spent the remainder of the day disappointed that he wouldn't be able to read what she had written. Her answer hadn't left him much room to maneuver, and that irritated him. His students did nothing to alleviate his sour mood. By the time he closed the door to his quarters behind him at the end of the day, his shoulders were tense, and a headache was sprouting from the base of his skull.

He was in such a rush to find a potion to relieve the headache that he didn't notice the envelope on the floor until he had sat down to mark some abysmal second-year essays. He carefully picked the white envelope up and returned to his desk to cast some basic detection spells on it. Nothing seemed amiss, so he lifted the flap and pulled out several sheets of parchment with the unmistakably neat handwriting of Hermione Granger on them.

Severus shifted in his seat, not believing his fortune. A quick glance confirmed his suspicions. It was the mysterious novel she had confessed to writing at breakfast that morning. She hadn't left a note or any indication she meant him to read it, but why else would she slip it beneath the door to his private chambers?

The essays were forgotten in favor of a potentially revealing tale by Miss Granger.

However, when he had finished reading the two lengthy chapters, he was left feeling dissatisfied. What she had written was completely safe, safe enough for a first-year to read. It was devoid of all the debauchery he had been expecting to find within any romance novel worth its weight in gold. He knew it was ridiculous to expect a novel to begin with sex, but his impatience got the best of him.

What did interest him was the description of the leading man. The tall, thin build with dark, shoulder-length hair was quite familiar. He dismissed the idea that she might be describing him when Hermione went on to write that the gentleman was *oddly handsome*. Severus knew his better qualities, and they were definitely not any of his physical attributes. However, Sebastian Sandor, her dark and brooding hero, shared many behavioral characteristics with himself. They were both easily annoyed by incompetence and fiercely private. Severus imagined he sounded like Sebastian when he spoke to people.

But, he knew he was not Sebastian Sandor. Sebastian was oddly handsome, and Severus was a downright fright. The beginning of the tale introduced a young woman named Haley, who was visiting Sebastian's estate in order to spend some time with her aunt Eva, Sebastian's assistant. Eva was an elderly woman who helped manage the estate and business. Unfortunately, just as Haley arrives, the second of two missing paintings disappears from Sebastian's very own home. He and Eva are in a rush to discover who stole them and how they were taken from under Sebastian's nose. Haley, being a smart young lady very similar to Hermione herself, wants to help solve the mystery, but Eva sends her to bed instead.

The only satisfying interaction in the two chapters was the tension between Haley and the older Sebastian. Hermione had stated in no uncertain terms that Haley found Sebastian quite attractive and even more mysterious. By the longing glances Sebastian threw in Haley's direction, he was feeling more than friendship toward her as well. But, in the end, it was nothing but a fluffy mystery novel with no real hints of being the wanton tale he had been expecting and anticipating for all these days.

As promised, Severus marked his corrections with the same red quill he used for marking students' papers. He sighed in resignation and slid the parchment back into the envelope. So much for additional fuel for his wicked thoughts of her. He would have to come up with this evening's fantasy all on his own.

*Author's Note: I just wanted to remind to any of those who are curious -- this fic is complete and eight chapters long. I'm finishing up the beta corrections on the last four right now. Also, a huge thank you to moonrevel and JenF for being such wonderful people and betas.*

## Chapter 5

After catching Hermione reading a romance novel, Snape urges her to write her own and offers to edit it for her. He doesn't think she'll actually do it, though.

## CHAPTER 5

Her office was rather small, but Hermione enjoyed spending time in it. While her bedroom held bad memories of the nightmares she had several times a week, her office only reminded her that she had her dream job. It wasn't exactly her dream life, but she could think of nothing more satisfying than immersing herself in knowledge and the education of young minds.

The grandfather clock in the corner chimed the hour, telling her that dinner was being served in the Great Hall. She hadn't planned on attending dinner because she was avoiding Severus Snape, and he was sure to be there at the staff table, towering over the chattering students. After shoving her manuscript into his private rooms the evening before, she hadn't seen him. The chapters were harmless, only containing a few longing looks between Sebastian and Haley; however, Hermione was worried Snape would think the male lead was modeled after him. Sebastian was, but Hermione certainly didn't want to tell Snape that.

Just as she finished marking the last essay on her desk, she heard someone knock at her door. "Come in," Hermione called, placing the parchments in her desk drawer.

The door opened to reveal the one person she had spent the day avoiding: Severus Snape. Hermione wanted to sink into her chair and crawl under her oversized desk. She almost did when she saw the white envelope in his hand. Giving him the manuscript had been a bad idea; she had no idea why she had done it.

Snape tossed the envelope on her desk and stood behind the visitor's chair. "I've marked my corrections, though I found it to be rather dull, seeing as how the crux of a *romance* novel is that it should be lascivious in nature."

Hermione had to fight to keep her mouth from hanging open. He was absolutely serious and obviously had no idea he had been the inspiration for Sebastian. If he had even suspected, she had no doubt he would have been in her office demanding to know why she was poking fun at him.

"I can't just throw two characters together and have them... well, you know," she said when she finally regained her wits.

Snape snorted, all but rolling his eyes at her. "Please, Granger, that's what romance novels do. They throw two characters together and, in one way or another, force them into having sexual relations. They certainly don't have lofty notions of actual plot."

"This coming from the person who claims he knows nothing about romance novels," she said, glaring at the insufferable man standing in front of her desk.

He smirked, an evil gleam dancing in his dark eyes. "Oh, my apologies, Granger. I imagine you need to brush up on the sexual aspect of things before you begin writing it. Yes?"

Hermione felt like her entire body flushed red, but she wasn't sure if it was from embarrassment or rage. She nearly threw him out of her office, telling him never to infer anything about her private life. Only the smug look on his face stopped her. Getting angry would only give him what he wanted. Instead, she inhaled a deep, calming breath. "Are you offering to help, then?"

For a brief, glorious moment, Snape was absolutely speechless. Hermione wanted to throw her hands in the air and declare victory. When his customary sneer returned, he replied, "Do you think me that magnanimous, Miss Granger?"

"I don't know, Professor. Your overly kind attitude these last two weeks has been rather out of character for you. Have you been under Imperio or have you simply lost your mind?" Hermione replied, folding her hands on her desktop.

Apparently, he had lost his mind because Snape only laughed and exited her office. The door clicked shut behind him, and Hermione began to question her own sanity. Surely that encounter had never happened. Surely she had never written the beginnings of a romance novel and let Snape proofread it for her just before she, in a round about way, propositioned him for sex. And surely he wasn't actually *flirting* with her.

Hermione smiled to herself. Not that she would be opposed to his flirting with her.

She looked at the seemingly innocent white envelope on her desk. Her fantasies of Snape taking her against an innocuous dungeon wall came crashing back, giving her an idea for the next chapter. If he wanted something a bit more risqué, that's what she'd give him.

~~~~~

He found the envelope after his last class of the day. It had been tucked away in his desk drawer, which had annoyed him greatly at first. That she had the gall to enter his private office and rummage through his drawers was enough to make his blood boil. The anger quickly dissipated when he saw her tidy handwriting on the envelope.

*You asked for it...*

Severus shifted in his seat, already anticipating what she had written after their conversation the day before about the lack of sex in her first two chapters. He certainly hoped she made up for it in this one. Hermione had always been a conscientious student who took her professor's criticisms into account in her next essay. He didn't think he had ever found that aspect of her personality useful until today.

Unable to wait until he returned to his private quarters, Severus ripped the envelope open and scanned the first page. Nothing of interest was written there, just more discussion of Haley Garten and her explorations of Sebastian's estate while everyone was asleep. The girl was hoping to find the art thief while roaming the empty halls of the large house.

Severus moved on to the next page and smiled when Haley turned the corner and collided with none other but Sebastian Sandor.

*Haley felt Sebastian's strong hands latch onto her upper arms, helping her regain her balance after she had crashed into his chest. He smelled faintly of cedarwood and vanilla, and just the touch of his capable hands sent Haley's heart into arrhythmia.*

*"Sir, I'm so sorry."*

*Slowly, Sebastian released her and took a step back, observing the thin, cotton gown she customarily wore to bed. "It's late, Miss Garten. Why are you prowling my halls well after midnight?"*

*"I... I... I couldn't sleep."*

*"Mmm..." Sebastian murmured, his silky voice turning Haley's knees to jelly.*

*She couldn't look away as he slowly slid his gaze down her body, tracing the curves so evident beneath the gauzy gown. She had forgone her undergarments that evening when preparing for bed, and she regretted the decision until she saw the heat in his dark eyes. That he might find her desirable sent a thrill of excitement through Haley.*

*She could barely stand still while he perused her body.*

*"Proper young ladies don't run about in such flimsy little gowns, Miss Garten. Perhaps you should have donned more appropriate attire before taking your little stroll."*

*"Of course, sir," Haley replied breathlessly.*

*Sebastian finally lifted his eyes to lock with hers. "However, now, I'm afraid, we'll have to discuss your punishment for walking about my house in next to nothing."*

*"Please don't make me leave, Mr. Sandor. I've only just arrived to visit my Aunt Eva. I'll return to my room right now if you'd like."*

*He chuckled, and it sent vibrations of desire through Haley's entire body. "Oh, no, Miss Garten, I'll not throw you out, but what will you give me in payment for flitting about my house, teasing me in such a way?"*

*Haley swallowed and cleared her throat nervously. "Teasing you, sir?"*

*"Teasing me," he agreed, stepping closer to her. "How many young ladies do you think I have wandering around my home in a slip of a gown, leaving nothing to the imagination?"*

*She crossed her arms defensively over her chest and took a step backward, away from the suddenly predatory Sebastian. "I didn't intend..." Haley gasped when her back hit the coarse stone wall that lined the dark hallway.*

*"Yes, Miss Garten, I'm sure you didn't 'intend' to do anything, but that doesn't change the fact that you did." He lowered his voice when his body was mere inches from hers. "What recompense shall you give me, then?"*

*"I..." Haley trailed off, unable to formulate a response in the face of his aggressive desire.*

*Sebastian smirked. "Do you find me attractive, Miss Garten?"*

*Haley didn't think twice before answering with a breathy yes.*

*"I thought at much. Your lovely chest is heaving with each breath you take." He slowly traced the curve of her cheek and jaw with a single finger.*

*"What shall I give you, Mr. Sandor?" she asked in a soft, unsure voice.*

*"Call me Sebastian, Haley."*

*She nodded and tried to swallow the mixture of unease and anticipation rising in her throat. "Sebastian," she hesitantly repeated.*

*"Good girl," he whispered in her ear. The touch of his lips on the delicate flesh of her ear nearly undid her tenuous composure. "Lift your nightgown."*

*Haley's fingers curled into the fabric and lifted before she really even thought of what she was doing. Her more practical side kicked in when the hem of the gown was only an inch from exposing her sex to his expectant eyes. "Sir... Sebastian..."*

*"Yes, Haley?" His hand had found its way between her legs. He touched her gently with probing fingers, and her face flushed when she realized exactly how wet she was for him. "Do you want my mouth there?"*

*She closed her eyes and pressed the back of her head against the stone wall until it hurt. "Yes," she hissed through clenched teeth.*

*Sebastian chuckled as he smoothly knelt before her. "Naughty little girl," he mused before pressing his mouth between her spread legs, licking the juices from her lower lips. His nose pressed against her clitoris with each swipe of his talented tongue. It was enough to drive Haley to the brink of ecstasy.*

*When her moans of appreciation gained enough volume to echo through the empty halls, Sebastian placed a hand over her mouth. His fingers smelled strongly of her musk, and Haley darted her tongue out to press between two of his fingers, tasting the dampness there.*

*"Come for me, Haley," Sebastian demanded, pressing the tip of his tongue against her nub. Driven by base instinct and blind desire, Haley bit down on two of his fingers as she came against his mouth, shuddering with the intensity of the release.*

*All Haley could think about was how good the cool stones felt against her heated flesh. Her entire body was still trembling, and she nearly slid down the wall to take a seat on the hallway floor.*

*"You bit me," Sebastian whispered in her ear. He was standing again, pressing his lean body into hers.*

*"I'm sorry?" Haley murmured, unsure of what to say.*

*He chuckled. "On your knees. Now."*

*"I..."*

*"I want to feel your mouth on me."*

*Haley dropped to her knees. The thin carpet in the hall gave very little cushioning, but it was better than a bare floor. She didn't muse on that for too long because Sebastian was deftly undoing the buttons along the front of his trousers. He pulled out a thick and very hard shaft, placing it less than an inch from her lips.*

*She quickly wetted her lips in anticipation. "Touch me," Sebastian prompted, looking down his nose at her.*

*Hesitantly, Haley lifted a hand and wrapped her fingers around the base of his erection. It was warm to the touch and twitched slightly in her hand. She looked up to see Sebastian's dark eyes watching her closely.*

*"Suck it," he demanded.*

*This time she didn't hesitate. Haley parted her lips and wrapped them around the head of his shaft. The drop of moisture at the tip was salty and slightly bitter on her tongue. She went to work right away, pumping him with her hand as she moved her head up and down on his engorged shaft.*

*In the matter of only a couple minutes, his fingers were twisted in her mane of hair, guiding her movements. His breathing was labored and harsh, echoing down the deserted hallway. She could sense he was close by his uneven and jerky movements, his hips pushing forward as if of their own volition.*

*It wasn't much longer before she felt a spasm shake his body and a hot burst of his semen fill her mouth. Haley pulled away and swallowed on instinct. She had performed oral sex on a previous boyfriend, but he had never finished in her mouth. She found it wasn't too distasteful, especially considering who had just spilled himself on her tongue.*

There were two more pages left, but he couldn't finish them. Severus stood from his desk and paced his office, looking at the jars filled with disgusting ingredients and other items to scare the children who happened to wander inside. His cock pressed insistently against the front of his trousers, not subsiding or allowing him to ignore his needs.

Reading the chapter in his office was a mistake. He couldn't simply jerk off at the same desk where he met with students. Then again, he also couldn't walk down the hall to his rooms with a raging erection. He could barely think straight as it was.

Severus compromised by standing behind his high-backed desk chair with the fingers of his left hand curled tightly over the top while his right hand quickly pumped his cock. All he could think about was Hermione's pretty little lips replacing his hand. He stared at the pieces of parchment scattered on his desk, seeing nothing but her prim handwriting forming such deliciously devious words and phrases.

He pretended she had thought of him when she wrote the scene between Sebastian and Haley. He thought of slamming her against the far wall and fucking her into oblivion.

With a strangled groan, Severus came all over the back of his leather chair. Shaking with release, he rested his forehead on the top of the chair back and sighed. This sort of intense desire was a bit much to deal with. He had lusted after women before, of course. However, nothing had been like this. He felt like Hermione was consuming his thoughts, his very mind.

Severus desperately wanted her, but he had no idea how to get her, or even if she would care to reciprocate his feelings of desire. There was also the matter of Minerva. He was familiar with the rules that governed the school, and there were none that would forbid a relationship between professors. However, he didn't think Minerva would look too kindly on his lustful thoughts for her former prize student and newest staff member.

Pulling himself together, Severus banished the mess from the back of his chair, tucked himself back inside his trousers, and sat down at the desk again. While he was sated, he would have to pull out his quill and read the chapter again for errors and suggestions as he had promised to do. However, he had a feeling that his cock wouldn't stay flaccid for long, especially when he found himself reading the detailed oral sex scene near the end of the chapter.

Before delving into the story again, he pulled out a blank scrap of parchment to write her a short note while his wits were still about him. Severus desperately wanted to write her something dirty, telling her that he had jerked off to her delicious little tale. He didn't dare, though. Instead, he wrote, *As with all things, you've excelled. I have no doubt you'll find an interested publisher, provided that you continue to allow me to improve upon your writing.*"

After a moment's hesitation, Severus signed the note with his given name.

*Author's Note: A huge thank you to moonrevel and JenF for their beta assistance and time. Also, I want to thank everyone who has been reviewing and commenting. I appreciate you all so much. :-)*

## Chapter 6

*Chapter 6 of 9*

After catching Hermione reading a romance novel, Snape urges her to write her own and offers to edit it for her. He doesn't think she'll actually do it, though.

### CHAPTER 6

If Hermione thought it best to avoid Snape after she had slipped the first two chapters of her story under his door, then she had no qualms over avoiding him now that she'd given him the third chapter. The first two were tame. The third involved oral sex in an empty hallway. Not to mention, she thought it was painfully obvious Sebastian was her literary version of Snape. She wondered if Snape suspected as much.

She couldn't believe she had gone through with it. Writing the lustful little scene, letting her fantasies play out on paper, and then handing it over to the one man who had inspired it all was something she had thought she'd never do. Up until a week ago, she never thought she'd find herself lusting after, and even *flirting* with, a former professor. It was almost shameful.

Her attention slowly faded back to her classroom. David Ecker was astoundingly bad with his wand work, almost to the point of reminding Hermione of Neville Longbottom. She watched her student try to levitate a small book on his desk. It shot sideways and crashed through the window behind her desk. The other students giggled, but Hermione cut them off, not wanting anyone to poke fun at the poor boy.

After telling the class to return to their work, she walked over to the window and called, *Accio Book!* It flew up to land in her open hand, the impact of the book jarring her injured shoulder a bit. Wincing, she repaired the glass with a flick of her wand and returned the book to David Ecker's desk. "You move your wand this way, David," she said, demonstrating the movement to him.

David nodded enthusiastically and resumed the exercise, while Hermione returned to her desk. He still hadn't managed to levitate anything at all when she dismissed the class.

With a heavy sigh, Hermione settled back into her desk chair. She wanted to see Snape, but she was so embarrassed by what she had written she couldn't bring herself to approach him. Instead, she had rushed through the halls all day, afraid he might see her. She had taken breakfast and lunch in her rooms, not daring to brave the Great Hall when his seat was beside hers. She couldn't keep this avoidance up forever, but she intended to try.

Usually, Hermione spent a couple hours each evening in the library, but she was afraid ~~he~~ she would find her there. It was one of his favorite places, after all. So, she resigned herself to hiding in her rooms, despite her feeling of discomfort there. The nightmares had not plagued her dreams this week as often as they had in previous weeks, but she still remembered them when she stepped into her bedroom.

Gathering her papers, she exited the classroom and warded the door behind her. She wasn't far from her quarters, and she felt reasonably sure she wouldn't run into the school's Potions master on the way there. Unfortunately, she was only ten steps down the hall when she saw his black robes swish around the corner. Hermione felt her stomach drop into her feet. To make matters worse, the glaring white envelope was in his hand, and she was too late to hide.

"Skipping breakfast and lunch now, Granger?"

Hermione watched him approach in his usual brusque manner, stopping just short of enveloping her in his robes. "I took them in my rooms," she explained, looking for a way to escape. Her face was already turning red; she could feel the burn of heated flesh on the apples of her cheeks.

"I believe this is yours," Snape said, raising a single brow at her flustered state and offering the envelope to her.

Hermione almost denied it and shoved the manuscript away. Instead, she hesitantly snatched it from his hand. "Thank you."

"You're most welcome," he said softly before turning around and retracing his steps.

Luckily, there weren't any students around to witness exactly how embarrassed their Charms professor was at the moment. Hermione held the manuscript in one clenched hand and retreated to her rooms before she could make a bigger fool of herself.

Once she had warded her door and taken her shoes off, Hermione sat down on the sofa beneath one of the two windows in her quarters. She still had the envelope in her right hand, her fingertips digging into the parchment. The message she had jotted down on the cover was still there, and her embarrassment made her want to sink into the stone floor of the castle.

With as much hesitation as she could muster, Hermione lifted the flap of the envelope and pulled the manuscript out. His precise red handwriting had crossed out words, corrected mistakes, and made suggestions along the margins. Nothing seemed amiss until she noticed the small piece of parchment that had landed on her lap. It had not been in the envelope when she had given him the manuscript for his perusal.

Hermione grimaced as she turned the note over and read it. Actually, she read the note in full four times before she dropped her gaze to the manuscript again. As startling as it was, she believed Snape had just written a compliment to her. She had irrefutable proof that Severus Snape actually thought she was worth something. It made her giggle and cover her flushed face with her cold hands. They felt good on her warm cheeks.

She looked at the note again. *Severus*. He had signed it with his given name, something she had never dared call him before. He didn't call her Hermione, and she never once considered he would allow her to call him Severus. Hermione couldn't wipe the ridiculous smile off her face. Was he flirting with her? Surely, writing a note that praised her talents after reading one of the dirty sexual scenes she had been imagining him in constituted flirting with her.

She stood up and paced the room. Her mixture of excitement and embarrassment prevented her from sitting still. The stone floor was chilly on her bare feet, but she didn't notice at all. Her shoulder was still sore from catching David Ecker's book in her classroom minutes before, but she didn't notice that either.

Turning back to the sofa, Hermione's eyes traced the scattered pages of the manuscript. She wondered if any of it had turned him on. He always appeared to be so reserved and even haughty. The thought of Snape touching himself beneath his black robes while he read her story sent a thrill through her that began a throbbing between her thighs. She shifted and squeezed her legs together. Recently, thinking about him always led to lustful thoughts and a deliciously tight feeling in her abdomen.

Hermione bit her lower lip, nibbling on it as she swept her gaze along the length of her sofa. She could just imagine Snape throwing her door open, letting it bounce loudly against the wall before sweeping across the floor toward her. He would push her roughly back on the cushions, descending on her willing body right away. And he would be fast and deft with his long fingers, hiking her robes and skirt up before pushing her knickers out of the way.

Heavily, she sank into the armchair behind her, never taking her eyes off the sofa and the discarded manuscript with his red ink all over it. The muscles of her thighs were trembling from the pressure of her clenching them tightly together. Snape wouldn't talk; he wouldn't ask permission or explain his desire. He would just take her right there, his cock buried deep within her while his teeth left small indentations on the soft flesh of her neck.

Her breath was shallow and loud in her roaring ears. Unable to stand the unreleased pressure, Hermione burrowed a hand between her legs. Her robes and skirt prevented her from touching the heated flesh there, but it felt sinfully good to touch herself while thinking of him fucking her on the red sofa beneath the window.

She had a view of the Quidditch pitch. Hermione shifted anxiously in her seat while she thought of some unsuspecting player passing by her window while chasing an errant Snitch and seeing Snape pounding her into the plush cushions of the sofa.

Shaking her head, Hermione stood and smoothed the front of her robes. She was far from an exhibitionist, but these thoughts of Snape were driving her wild. With an admirable show of restraint, she straightened the pages of the manuscript and sat them on the end table before retiring to the bathroom for a very long shower, one she fantasized sharing with Severus Snape.

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He made her entire body vibrate with tension each time he was within ten feet of her. Hermione barely managed to talk to him coherently, she was so strung out on desire and nervousness. She wondered at his inability to see how he affected her. Surely his self-esteem wasn't so low that he didn't believe he could turn her into a silly, stumbling, mumbling schoolgirl with a mere glance. Because he very well could.

By the end of the week, she had come to the conclusion that his previous experience as a spy gave him a completely unfair advantage in this little flirtatious game they were playing.

Her sexual frustrations leaked over into her dreams. That morning she had nearly wept with relief when she woke completely sated after a vivid dream about Snape. Anything was better than another recounting of Harry's scream when both he and Voldemort perished a mere ten feet from her, even if it did involve Snape slipping her beneath his terribly Slytherin green satin bed sheets.

She settled into the oversized desk chair in her private rooms. The sixth year essays she needed to mark were tucked away in the bottom drawer. She couldn't concentrate on them when thoughts of *him* and all the sinful things they could do together wouldn't leave her alone. Just sitting by him at dinner a few minutes ago was torture. She began to wonder if he really did suspect her attraction to him, seeing as how he continued to brush his arm against hers each time he reached for his drink.

Instead of essays this evening, she had several blank sheets of parchment in front of her. Hermione thought she might be going crazy because she could think of nothing but Snape. She groaned when she shifted her hips in the chair. She had thought she knew what horny felt like when she was being felt up by Victor two days after the Winter Ball in fourth year. She knew better now. *This* was what horny felt like, and she was as surprised as anyone that Snape had inspired such feelings.

She desperately wanted to know if he was in any way affected by what she had written last time or if he secretly thought about her. Perhaps if she was a bit more explicit with her writing, he might be moved to action. She was unsure as to what she wanted him to do, but a decent snog in his storage closet might hit the spot at least for now. Deciding to let her fantasies play out on the paper, she picked up a quill and began the next chapter with a smile.

*It had been three long nights since Haley's encounter with Mr. Sandor. She and her aunt had taken dinner with him the evening after the incident in the hall. He had been distant and made no mention of what had happened between them. It drove Haley mad. She desperately wanted to see him again, but he made no indication that he wished it as well, which made her doubt herself and her desirability.*

*Those nights had been spent in restlessness with her legs wrapped in oppressively hot bedclothes while she thought of him and the way his cock had felt in her mouth. Haley rolled over and pressed her face into the pillow. She wanted Sebastian so badly, she couldn't stand it. She thought she might die of her desire for him, but he seemed preoccupied with a third painting theft from his private collection.*

*Resigning herself to another night devoid of fulfillment, she sighed and closed her eyes. The clock across the room ticked away the seconds. Just as it began to lull her to sleep, she heard the sound of a key in the lock of her door. Her first thought was of the painting thief. There were two paintings of worth in her guest room. However, as soon as the door opened, she dispelled that silly notion. The body outlined by the dim light from the hall was unmistakable. She had watched it tower over her only a few nights before while she waited on her knees.*

*Haley wanted to fling herself out of the bed and into Sebastian's arms, but the tense way he held himself told her to remain where she was and feign sleep. With her eyes closed, she could only hear the soft whisper of his clothes as he moved across the room. When he didn't descend upon her, Haley cracked open one eye to watch him remove his coat and place it on an armchair. She quickly slammed her eyelid down when he turned to face her.*

*Moments later, she felt the sensation of fingertips ghosting up her calves, followed by his husky voice. "Miss Garten," he whispered.*

*"Yes?" she replied, opening her eyes and watching him bend over the foot of the bed to touch her bare legs.*

*"Why aren't you asleep?"*

*Haley swallowed her nervousness. "I've been waiting for you, sir."*

*"Is that so?"*

*She nodded and pressed her face into the pillow again.*

*His smirk was evident in the tone of his voice. "Well, aren't you a naughty young lady. Perhaps I should reprimand you for such depraved thoughts." He paused and watched her curiously. "Were they depraved, Miss Garten?"*

*Haley nodded again. "Yes, sir. Very."*

*"Good, good." Like a lithe panther, he climbed into bed with her, spreading her legs to kneel between them. She knew her short nightgown offered little protection from his gaze because it was bunched up around her hips, barely covering her sex. She hadn't worn knickers since their first encounter, hoping that it might be repeated one night. Perhaps tonight was that night.*

*Without another word, he descended on her, his long black hair blotting out the moonlight filtering in through the sheer drapes. Tentatively, she twined her fingers in the silky strands as his tongue swept up from the hollow of her throat to beneath her jaw. He lingered there for a moment before licking over the jut of her chin and, eventually, plunging his tongue between her lips to taste her mouth.*

*Haley moaned her pleasure into his open mouth as his hand cupped her mound. She spread her legs to allow Sebastian to settle between them, enjoying the pleasure of his weight at the junction of her thighs.*

*Drawing back from her, Sebastian looked down upon her prone form beneath him. Using his arms to hold most of his weight, he leaned down and pressed his warm lips to her ear. "You're positively soaking wet, Miss Garten." Pushing himself up, he removed his hand from between her legs and held it between them.*

*By the dim moonlight, she could see her juices on the two fingers he had been thrusting inside her. Haley flushed.*

*"From the moment I tasted you that night, I knew I wouldn't rest until I felt your slick walls surrounding my cock," he murmured in her ear.*

*Haley could barely think, but she gave a vague nod. Sebastian must have taken it as assent because, without another word, he slid inside her. The sudden sensation of his thickness stretching her made Haley suck in a sharp breath. "Sir," she moaned, bucking up to meet his second thrust.*

*Sebastian trailed the long fingers of one of his beautiful hands down her face. "I believe, Miss Garten, that if we are fucking, you can call me Sebastian." It would have sounded condescending if it weren't for his ragged breath and tense voice.*

*She continued to lift her hips and rock with his thrusting motions, not realizing that, one at a time, Sebastian had moved his hands from the bed to her wrists, forcing them over her head and tight against the mattress.*

*Transferring her wrists to the prison of one long-fingered hand, he used his free hand to guide one leg over his left shoulder. The change in position curled Haley's toes because now his already large cock was pressing even deeper and producing a sensation that bordered on pleasure and pain. Within mere seconds, pleasure won out, and she threw her head back in ecstasy. His palm cupped her mound, his thumb toying with her clitoris. It was more than Haley could take. She fell apart in his hands, writhing across the smooth sheets while he tried to hold her down beneath him.*

*Haley's teeth pressed into her lower lips as she formed the beginning of a guttural exclamation. "Fuck," she said harshly as her body dropped back onto the bed after her climax.*

*Only a moment later, she felt Sebastian's body tense and his smooth thrusts become erratic and uneven. With a groan, he pressed into her one last time before spilling himself within her.*

*Hermione pressed her teeth into the corner of her bottom lip and slipped the sheets of parchment into a fresh envelope after the ink had dried on the final page. She had been blatantly obvious with her description of Sebastian, his mannerisms, and his choice of words. He wasn't a clone of Snape, but it was quite apparent that the Hogwarts Potions master had inspired the character. Snape would be blind if he didn't see it. A good portion of her hoped he would see the truth of the character and recognize himself in it. The more reserved side of Hermione blanched at the possibility he could so easily expose her newest secret desire. Then again, she hadn't exactly tried to hide it when she wrote the ridiculous chapter.*

*She wished she could secretly watch him while he read it, but knew that would be impossible. She couldn't spy on the master spy himself, but she could dream about his reaction to her words.*

*Toying with the feather tip of her quill, she pondered what sort of message, if any, she should leave for him on the cover of the envelope. With a devious smirk, she scratched a few words across the stark white envelope.*

*Awaiting the skillful strokes of your infamous red quill...*

*Hermione giggled when she read what she had just written to him. She knew she was shamelessly flirting with the man, but she couldn't help herself. Life had been horrible since that day when Voldemort had been defeated. It wasn't until just recently that she began feeling like she might be able to carry on with some semblance of happiness. Just talking to Snape made her feel giddy and stirred the butterflies in her stomach. They were a welcome distraction from the ache in her shoulder.*

*Without thinking much of it, she signed her first name below the short message and sealed the envelope. She would slip it under his door while he was taking breakfast in the Great Hall the next morning.*

## Chapter 7

Chapter 7 of 9

After catching Hermione reading a romance novel, Snape urges her to write her own and offers to edit it for her. He doesn't think she'll actually do it, though.

### CHAPTER 7

Severus was so hard he felt like he could pierce a hole through the stone wall of his sitting room. He'd just finished reading the latest installment of Hermione's naughty little tale of seduction and sex. By willpower alone, he had not released himself from his increasingly tight trousers, nor had he touched himself. However, Severus knew that wouldn't last much longer. He was merely savoring the sensation, anticipating his release when he finally did take his cock in his hand and stroke it to thoughts of Hermione.

Despite second guessing himself through the previous chapters, Severus could no longer deny that he and Sebastian Sandor were remarkably alike. It couldn't be a coincidence, but he had not yet determined Hermione's motives in modeling the character after him. The portion of his ego most damaged by those difficult years at Hogwarts wondered if she was making fun of him. However, his more rational side knew Hermione would never do something so deliberately cruel, especially after he had heard her defend him many times in the past.

This line of thought only led him to wonder if she was actually excited by him. The idea that she might fantasize about him made him even harder. Severus knew it was a long-shot, but he allowed himself to indulge in it while he picked up his quill and wrote a short note on a blank scrap of parchment.

*Very naughty, Hermione. My capable quill anxiously awaits the next installment of this lascivious little tale.*

He managed to scratch his name below the message before sliding a hand into his trousers.

~~~~~

Hermione knew she should have waited until *after* the staff meeting to open the envelope. If she had, she would have read Snape's short message to her in the comfort of her own rooms, not in an uncomfortable brown leather chair in the staff room. Pomona Sprout was giving her an odd look, like she knew Hermione was holding a shameless chapter of a pathetic romance novel that Severus Snape had edited. Of course, Hermione knew Pomona had no idea about the novel and Snape's involvement in it, but that didn't stop her from feeling guilty.

She glanced down at his note again. He had called her *naughty*. And she had *liked* it. Hermione shifted in her seat and crossed her legs. Just the thought of him reading the chapter and having such a response made her wet.

Horny was not an appropriate state of mind during a Hogwarts staff meeting.

She wiggled her foot impatiently. Everyone was there except for Minerva and *him*. Hermione wasn't sure if she could face him before she was able to frig herself to death and then splash some cold water on her face. She hadn't seen him since she slipped the envelope under his door the previous night. Instead of handing the latest corrections over in person, he had left it on her desk beneath a stack of second-year essays. She happened across it minutes before the staff meeting, and her obvious lack of self-control was the reason for her current predicament.

She shifted in her seat again and looked up to meet Snape's eyes when he walked through the door. As much as she wanted to sink into the chair, she certainly couldn't do it without her wand. And her wand was in her robe pocket, not easily accessible at the moment. Besides, the other professors would most likely see her disappear, especially Pomona, the nosey busy-body.

Despite willing her skin not to turn that unbecoming shade of red, she still blushed under his dark gaze. Without taking her eyes off him, she quickly shoved the note back into the envelope. The only response he offered was a slight lift of one brow as he settled into his usual chair in the corner. He was several yards away from her, but she still had difficulty quelling the flip-flopping of her stomach. As embarrassed as she was, she was also exhilarated at this dangerous little game she had been playing with Hogwarts' most feared professor.

"Are you feeling well, dear?" Minerva's voice made Hermione nearly jump out of her seat. She hadn't heard the Headmistress come in the room. Everyone's eyes had shifted over to Hermione, and the idle chit-chatting had dwindled into silence.

"I... I'm fine," she finally managed to sputter out, glancing around the room and giving her colleagues a quick smile. She made sure to avoid Snape's eyes. He'd just fluster her more. And would Minerva *ever* stop asking her if she was feeling well? Depression was certainly not on her mind at the moment.

With a curt nod, Minerva moved to the front of the room to begin the informal staff meeting. Hermione finally shifted her eyes to Snape. He was still watching her with an odd look on his face. She smiled weakly and uncrossed her legs. If she had to endure his gaze the entire meeting, she'd probably melt onto the floor.

~~~~~

Severus drummed his fingertips on top of his cluttered desk. He had seen Hermione only two hours ago at the staff meeting, but he wanted to march over to her private quarters and demand she talk to him. Or do other things with him. He smirked at his depraved thoughts. All these years of celibacy in the damned school had finally driven him mad. He was willing to gamble his coveted pride in order to steal a kiss from her surprised lips.

The student essays on his desk held no appeal. He would much rather read another chapter in her story. He knew that wasn't possible, though. He had only returned the last chapter to her that afternoon. There was no way she would be sliding another under his door for at least twelve hours, perhaps more. He hoped it wouldn't be much longer because he felt like he might explode.

After his dreadful experiences with girls while he attended Hogwarts, he never allowed himself to find more than the basest physical attraction to anyone. It unnerved Severus to realize that he found Hermione attractive in more than a sexual sense, though the sexual attraction was by no means to be discounted in any way. He could see himself spending Saturday afternoons with her, browsing the latest issue of Potions Quarterly together. To make himself feel better, he also thought of spending Saturdays repeatedly pinning her to the bed.



His feelings were confused even more by Sebastian, who bore a striking resemblance to him. Despite his initial denial, the more he thought about Sebastian, the more he wondered if Hermione had intentionally modeled the character after him. Perhaps she had a soft spot for him after all. The thought made Severus smile wistfully at the barren dungeon wall in front of him.

Trying to will away the beginnings of an erection, he stood and strode toward the door to his chambers. If he spent the rest of the evening locked away in his rooms, he would surely masturbate himself to death while thinking of Hermione and the wicked mind she was hiding behind those intelligent brown eyes. Besides, a walk around the lake would do him good.

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A scattering of clouds drifted in front of the moon just as Hermione saw Snape moving across the lawn toward the lake. Even though she was several stories up in her chambers, she knew the stiff set of his back and the confident stride of his long legs.

She had been standing at the tall window, looking out over the moonlit lawn for several minutes, contemplating her next move. Hermione had no intention of insinuating herself into Snape's life in a romantic capacity, though she wouldn't necessarily say she did not desire it. Despite all the comments and looks she had been taking as flirtation, she still wasn't sure where she stood with him and what he wanted from her. She had never met a man so difficult to read.

One of his pale hands flashed over his hair, pushing it out of his face as he continued toward the lake at a brisk pace. Hermione absently nibbled on her lower lip, trying to decide if she should join him outside or watch him from the safety of her quarters. After a moment of consideration, she threw caution to the wind and fled from her rooms.

In a flash, she was down the stairs and pulling open the heavy entrance door to the school. She knew she'd never catch up with him, so she slowed her pace, hoping she could join him as he completed his circuit around the lake. To Hermione's surprise, Snape seemed to sense her presence just as she stepped onto the shore. He glanced over his shoulder and slowed down to allow her to catch up with him.

Once she was comfortably walking beside him, she smiled nervously. "Hi."

Without looking at her, he nodded. "Good evening, Miss Granger."

"It's a lovely night, don't you think?" Hermione cringed as soon as the words left her mouth. They sounded trite and awkward.

"Surely we're beyond such inane observations, aren't we?" he answered with a wry smile and a sidelong glance in her direction.

Hermione chuckled under her breath, taking two steps for each of his long strides. "You're certainly in trouble now, Professor. Even your biting remarks amuse me."

"And why is that?"

She faltered slightly, falling behind his steady pace while she truly considered his question. "I suppose," she responded, catching up with him, "it is because you treat me like a living person, not an unfortunate casualty of the war."

Snape glanced at her with a raised eyebrow.

"Well, it's just that everyone seems to think I might lose my mind if they say anything to me beyond talk of work or condolences about my losses during the war. I'm not going to lose my mind. If I were going to, then I certainly would have done it before now."

"Have you truly come to terms with the past, or am I merely a convenient way of avoiding it?"

"Trust me, sir, I am *not* avoiding it. I think about it each night when I go to bed, each morning when I get up, not to mention the many moments during my day when I'm reminded of someone I knew who is no longer here."

Without looking at her, Snape nodded slowly. "I find that denial and distraction are far better coping tools than facing the true situation or problem."

She could hear that slight tinge of amusement coupled with self-deprecation in his voice. It brought an unlikely smile to her face. "Well, I *am* a Gryffindor after all. I hardly think denial and distraction run in my blood." After a short pause, she continued. "What did you use to distract yourself all those years?"

"Many things. Potions mostly."

Hermione nearly tripped over her own feet in disbelief. "But you love potions."

"Yes, but I was not born with that love. It became a convenient way to escape my life, made all the easier by the fact that I was actually quite good at it." He cleared his throat and glanced out over the lake. The angle hid his face from her behind a curtain of his hair. "To tell the truth, academics, in general, were my distractions during my years in school. Afterward, I honed in on potions as the most effective way to remove myself from the world around me."

Hermione frowned at the fall of his black hair hiding his face. "So, are you saying that if one enjoys a particular hobby, it is an attempt by that person to avoid problems in his or her life?"

"No. Don't twist my words. I was simply stating what I found to be true for myself." He huffed and spared a glance in her direction. "Perhaps I shouldn't reveal my secrets quite so freely if you're not going to make an effort to understand."

Reflexively, Hermione apologized. "I'm sorry, sir. I didn't mean to question your... confession."

"Don't call me sir. It makes me feel like I'm as old as Slughorn."

"What shall I call you, then? Professor? Snape? The bat of the dungeons?"

"Do you enjoy pushing my buttons, Granger?"

She laughed lightly when she saw the contrived annoyance on his face. "It's the best part of my day, Mr. Bat."

"I'm sure there are much more creative names the students have thought up for me than that."

"I wouldn't know. I never participate in name-calling."

"Oh, but, I'm sure Potter and Weasley were excellent at it." He looked over at her to gauge her reaction to the remark about her departed friends.

The wounds were still there, but she knew they were healing when Snape's mention of her friends didn't make her feel like crying. "You can't blame them; you weren't all that nice to them."

"True," he agreed.

"As infuriating as they could be, I still miss them terribly," Hermione said softly. She stopped and looked down at her shoes as they slowly sunk into the muddy ground along the lake. She knew he had also stopped just past her, waiting for her to resume their walk.

Finally, he cleared his voice and spoke up. "At the risk of sounding terribly unlike myself, I've a willing ear if you wish to talk about anything...even the bane of my existence himself."

Hermione scuffed her feet and looked up to meet his eyes, a small smile on her face. "I appreciate that."

She held his gaze for a long moment before Snape extended his arm toward the castle. "It's late. Perhaps we should return to the school."

Nodding, she fell into step beside him as they backtracked along the section of lake they had walked. Just as they were crossing the lawn, already wet with dew, Snape spoke up.

"Dare I call attention to this pink elephant between us?"

Hermione looked at him, confused. "What?"

"This rather large pink elephant we both seem to be ignoring, though we can both see it very well." He paused to gauge her clueless expression. "The novel," he hastily added.

Her lips opened, but nothing issued from them. Finally, she managed to repeat what he had said. "The novel."

"Your novel. The romance novel. Don't tell me you've forgotten about it. I know better than to believe you would forget a single word you've written or read."

"What about the novel?"

He appeared uncomfortable with the conversation, though she couldn't be quite sure in the dim light. "The man...Sebastian...seems quite familiar to me for some reason."

Panic nearly set in when he mentioned Sebastian, but Hermione managed to hold herself together, if just by a thin thread. "Oh? How so?"

She watched one of his pale hands wave about in the air, trying to conjure up some sort of answer. "It seems as if I've met him before."

They climbed the stairs, and Hermione waited while Snape opened the entrance door. "I actually feel the same way about him," she murmured. The stillness of the air ensured that he would hear her words, but he didn't respond.

Instead of parting at the door, he followed her back to her chambers, as if escorting her home. Not wanting to immediately return to her rooms, Hermione took the long way to them. Snape followed beside her. After a climb up a flight of stairs, he broke the silence again. "Are you attracted to him?"

"Sebastian? I suppose I am. Actually, I'm very much attracted to him, which is probably the reason I got a bit carried away with the... scenes, the details." She curled her nose up and risked a quick glance at her escort for the evening. "Was it too much?"

After a moment of consideration, Snape shook his head and turned the corner of the hall. "No, as I told you, I thought it was quite good." He dropped his eyes to the floor, watching his feet taking step after step down the long hall. Hesitantly, he added in a low voice, "It actually... excited me very much."

Hermione nearly swallowed her tongue at his admission. "Really?"

He confirmed with a slight nod of his head. Strands of his hair fell over his face, hiding his expression from her again.

They were only a few yards from her door. Abruptly, she stopped and turned to face him fully. "You know," Hermione said.

"Know what?"

"You know I wrote him like you." She sighed at his continued confusion. "Sebastian. He's you. Or at least you were the inspiration."

Snape fixed his gaze upon her. The firelight from the torches along the walls made his eyes appear soft and sensual, even darker than usual. The look of surprise on his face was unmistakable, but there was also something lurking beneath the surface. Hope, perhaps? It sent a nervous thrill through her stomach.

"I suspected, though I had no way to confirm such suspicions."

"Consider them confirmed then." She paused and tried to still her jittery body. "I'm sorry I used you," Hermione added, dropping her gaze to the floor.

His dark chuckle made Hermione lift her head to look at him again. "I hardly think, as a man, I should be distressed that a young lady has chosen to *use* me in such a way."

This was the last thing she would have expected from Severus Snape once he learned he had been the model for a male lead in a romance novel. "I...you... Are you serious?"

"I am indeed," he whispered softly, taking a step toward her. "Did you truly fantasize of doing those things...the things you wrote between Sebastian and Haley?"

His question caught her off guard, and she retreated backwards a step in confusion. Her back hit the rough wall of the corridor. Without much thought to her answer, she nodded and watched him step toward her.

Snape was so close she could feel his breath on her face. His robes brushed against hers as he shifted even closer. "I think of you, also, Hermione," he whispered in her ear. "I read those last two chapters multiple times, and I wanted it to be us."

"Yes," Hermione whispered.

"Did you know you made me so hard I could barely walk? That I jerked off to thoughts of fucking you after I had read what you had written?"

Hermione wasn't sure she could breathe, but she knew she just might come if he continued to talk dirty to her.

"If you want this...me...then send a note when you're ready," he murmured softly in her ear, his hands braced on the wall behind her. "I'll make you feel so good your legs will buckle beneath you each time you try to stand and leave my bed."

With that said, he pushed off the wall and disappeared into the shadows of the empty hall. Hermione stumbled to her rooms and managed to remove the wards after a couple failed attempts. When she was finally inside, she leaned against the closed door and slid to the floor. She definitely needed a cold shower.

*Author's Notes: I am an absolute heel. I apologize to everyone who has been reading this story and was anxious for the next chapter. You are all more than welcome to yell at me for taking so long to update it. The chapter had to undergo a few revisions, which I was being lazy about. I've also had a hectic two weeks with work being weird, at best, and a class after work that I had to attend for a few days. I admire all of you out there who work, write, \*and\* go to school. I've been out of school just long enough to forget how much it sucks to have no free time. Anywho, a big thank you to moonrevel for her fantastic beta assistance, and another huge thank you to JenF for helping with the characterization, especially in this chapter. Thank you both!*

# Chapter 8

*Chapter 8 of 9*

After catching Hermione reading a romance novel, Snape urges her to write her own and offers to edit it for her. He doesn't think she'll actually do it, though.

## CHAPTER 8

The flames from the fireplace glinted off the glass as he sat it down on the table by his favorite chair. Severus had served himself some firewhisky as soon as he walked in the door of his chambers. There was still quite a bit of liquor in the glass even though he had been nursing it all evening. The week had proven to be stressful in more ways than one, and the disappointment weighing on him was not helping.

Four long days had passed since he had allowed his attraction to Hermione Granger to overrule his good sense. Despite her admission of attraction to him, he had all but convinced himself that she never really liked him in *that* way. He had very little experience with women, especially young ladies like Hermione. As a teenager, he had taken a fancy to a few intelligent girls at Hogwarts, one of them being Lily Evans, but he had never acted on the attraction.

Perhaps his raging libido had frightened her away. Perhaps her labored breath and heaving chest in the hall that night had been indications of fear instead of desire. Severus felt like banging his head against the wall. It had all been a mistake, every blasted moment of it. And, now, he was so tense and filled with pent up desire for her, he could barely think straight or even enjoy an evening in quiet solitude.

There was no doubt about it, Hermione had been avoiding him. He barely saw her at meals in the Great Hall, and their frequent encounters on the castle grounds had ceased without any warning. Suddenly, she wasn't anywhere to be found, and he could do nothing about it.

Severus closed his eyes and placed the pads of his fingers along his temple, hoping the pressure would allow him to circumvent the imminent headache.

Thinking back on that night when he all but threw himself at her feet, he knew there had never truly been a way to avoid the encounter. They had both been dancing around each other for days, if not weeks. How could he *not* have declared his intentions when she was pressed against the wall, her chest rising seductively with each breath? She had been utterly gorgeous. He remembered it well...the way her hair had been slightly mussed from the cool breeze over the lake and the subtle way her robes had clung to her curves, flattering her body. Her lips had been moist and a deep shade of pink, and her glazed eyes alone had been enough to undo his self-control.

It would have been different if he hadn't read the beginnings of her novel. He could have pretended Hermione was cold, with no secret desires worth exploring. Of course, he had found her company acceptable even before the discovery of her romance novels, but he was not sure he would have ever considered a relationship with her without that push through the mental block of considering her a former student. Those last two chapters had changed everything. Now he had no illusions of Hermione, the survivor, being frigid or undesirable.

He looked down at the front of his trousers. It seemed that each time he thought of her, his cock sprang to life, as if begging him to do something about their sorry state of affairs. Recalling how he had thrown her wanton written words back at her when he had cornered her in the hall by her quarters pressed his erection so tightly against the fabric of the trousers he became uncomfortable.

"Fuck," he muttered in disgust, standing up and making his way to his desk. It was late, but sleep was the furthest thing from his mind. Instead of retiring for the evening, he decided to grade some essays. They had been sitting on his desk for almost a week; he had put them off long enough.

Just as he settled into the chair and adjusted his cumbersome erection, he saw a flash of white along the dull gray of the floor by his door. Standing from his desk chair, he saw an envelope, very much like the ones Hermione had used to conceal her chapters, laying innocuously on his floor.

With no small amount of trepidation, he walked across the sitting room and picked up the envelope. He thought it smelled like her, even though he knew he was being silly. Carefully, he opened the flap and pulled out a small scrap of parchment with ragged edges. A hastily scrawled message filled the front of the parchment. His heart jumped into his throat when he recognized her handwriting.

*I want you.*

That was it. A simple statement, but it was something he had been longing to hear since their encounter in the hall by her rooms. Though he was only in shirtsleeves, he flung the door open without hesitation, prepared to scour the halls for her if she had decided to run away after slipping the note beneath his door. The plans for the search proved to be useless when he saw Hermione standing opposite his door on the other side of the hall.

She looked nervous, yet absolutely shameless in her desire. The deep blue robes she wore had obviously been thrown on at the last minute. Her lips parted to issue an explanation, but he didn't allow her the opportunity. Instead, he took two quick strides out of his room, grabbed her arm, and pulled her inside.

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Hermione didn't know what she would have said had he given her time to speak. She thought it was probably for the best that he had smothered her mouth with his own as soon as she had been pulled into his sitting room.

She vaguely heard the door slam shut behind her before he pressed her against it, trapping her between the unyielding wood and his lanky body. She had not been prepared for this urgent display of desire and need. Words to explain and excuse her ridiculous note had been forming in her head even before she wrote the damn thing. Little did she know, she didn't need explanations. Severus's lips and tongue tasting the sensitive skin of her neck made that quite apparent.

Using the door behind her as leverage, she pushed her body more firmly into his as he moved his mouth to the modest neckline of her robes. His hands at her waist were bunching up the material of her robes, lifting the garment up her bare legs. She knew he was only seconds away from pulling them over her head, and she willingly helped him toss them aside when he finally did.

"Mmmm..." he murmured under his breath when he saw she had nothing but her undergarments on beneath the crumpled robes.

"I forgot my clothes," she tried to explain when he stopped kissing her long enough to stare at her plain, cotton knickers.

He moved closer, ghosting his lips over hers. "That is certainly not a problem, Hermione. I do prefer to do this without clothing."

She tried to smile at him, but it became more of a nervous grimace. She couldn't believe she had actually jumped off the proverbial cliff and all but asked him to fuck her senseless. Not that a roll in the sack was all she wanted; she just wasn't sure what that something else was.

The thoughts flashed through her head just as his lips touched hers again. The kiss was deep, but less frantic than the first. His hands were everywhere, on her bare skin, tracing the hems of her knickers, teasing her nipples through the fabric of her bra. Finally, he buried the fingers of one hand in the messy mane of her hair to pull her head back and expose the elegant column of her neck. She shivered in his arms as she felt his teeth gently scrape down the skin there.

"Severus..." she said softly.

"Take the bra off, Hermione." His voice vibrated against her neck as he closed his lips over the curve where her neck and shoulder met.

With fumbling hands, she found the clasp in the middle of her back and unhooked it, letting the straps slide down her shoulders. Severus pulled away just enough to allow the bra to fall to the floor between them. It was quickly forgotten when he dropped his mouth to her breasts, playing her nipples with the tip of his tongue.

That pleasurable sensation was dwarfed when he slid down her body, kneeling at her feet and tracing the edge of her knickers with his tongue. She watched the dark-haired crown of his head dip lower so he could place open lips over her mound, licking her through the drenched cloth of her knickers.

"Oh... Oh, my..." Hermione gasped. Her hands clutched at the door behind her, finding no purchase on the hard wood.

His fingers slid beneath the waist of her knickers and pulled them over her hips and down her thighs. They dropped, forgotten, to the floor while he pressed his face between her spread thighs. Her head was fuzzy, and she was unable to think properly when he guided one of her legs over his shoulder, letting the bend at her knee rest comfortably there.

When he finally buried his tongue within her, she cried out and clutched at the door again. Finally, she grasped the fabric of his shirt on his other shoulder and wound the fingers of her second hand in his dark hair. "I don't know if I can do this standing up," she said between heavy breaths.

Snape's only response was to move his tongue up to her clit while he carefully pushed two fingers inside her.

"Oh!" Hermione called out, rocking her hips into his hand. "I think... I might... my legs might... stop working. I don't want to fall on you."

"I'm not allowing you to move until you come," he answered before sucking her sensitive clit between his lips.

Each thrust of his fingers tightened her abdomen even more. The muscles there were already so tense she could feel them quivering. Severus's muffled moan and the way he moved his tongue from his penetrating fingers to her clit sent Hermione over the edge. She cried out in release, feeling her entire body flush with pleasure. If he had not held her bucking hips against the door, she would have collapsed into the floor with him.

Seconds ticked away as she slowly recovered from the orgasm, the thunderous roar in her ears finally subsiding. He was still on his knees before her, watching her with more than a little interest. His dark eyes were shining in the dim light of his sitting room.

Without much thought, she acted on impulse. Pushing him back, she dropped to the floor in front of him. He had been so surprised by her actions, he lay sprawled out on the ornate rug behind him. Hermione descended on him quickly, her hands darting to the opening of his trousers. While she managed the buttons there, he pulled his shirt over his head and toed his boots off. By the time she had undone his trousers, he lifted his hips for her so she could easily pull them down his legs. Always one to be efficient, she made sure to pull his briefs down with them.

His erection sprang free, jutting proudly into the air, begging her to slide on top of him and ride it. Just the sight of it made her ache with desire. Instead of succumbing to her initial reaction, she knelt beside him and pulled her hair back. Just as she lowered her mouth to within inches of his tip, she felt him grab her upper arm. She looked up at Severus and met his dilated eyes.

"I wouldn't be able to control myself," he whispered.

She smiled. "That's fine."

He chuckled and pulled her more firmly up his body. "I want to fuck you right now, Hermione. But, later, I will be more than pleased if you'd like to slide those hot little lips over my cock."

She couldn't deny him or argue. Besides, her body was screaming for him to fill her. Severus reached down and brushed the pad of a thumb over the moist head of his shaft. Never taking his eyes from her face, he lifted the drop of moisture to her lips. Hermione took his thumb into her mouth, sweeping her tongue over the salty taste of him. Severus groaned when he saw the heat in her eyes.

As if spellbound, Hermione slowly climbed on top of him, straddling his hips and letting his cock tease her entrance.

"That's it..." he hissed. His hips made small, jerky thrusts up toward her heat.

With a hand on his chest for balance, she guided him inside, slowly sinking down until he was completely enveloped inside her. She could feel his fingertips pressing firmly into the soft flesh of her hips, his thumbs pressing into the bones of her pelvis. They both stayed like that for a moment, adjusting to the new sensations.

Finally, Hermione lifted herself up and rolled her hips as she settled back down on him. "Yes," he groaned, throwing his head back and lifting his hips up as if he could push himself deeper inside. She had to agree with him; it felt fantastic to finally have him inside her after all those nights of fantasies.

The way his cock felt as it filled her each time she dropped down on him worked Hermione into a frenzy. Unaware of her surroundings, she began to move faster, slamming down harder on his pelvis with each thrust. She could barely see him through hazy eyes that were half-closed, but she could feel one of his hands move so he could press his thumb lightly against her clit. The additional stimulation was all she needed to shudder and come with a wordless cry of pleasure. She could feel him convulsing inside her, and she managed to open her eyes to see his face contorted in pleasure.

Feeling boneless and sated, she collapsed on top of him, feeling the subtle, but defined, muscles in his chest and arms shift to accommodate her more comfortably. His diminishing erection was still inside her when she laid her head on his chest. In a rare gesture of tenderness, he brushed her hair over to one side with a gentle hand.

"This isn't exactly how I planned it," Hermione said softly in the still room.

"Is that so?" he mumbled, looking down his chest at her bushy hair.

"Yes. I thought we would at least make it to your bed." Hermione lifted her head and rested her chin on his breastbone, watching the subtle play of expressions on his face.

Severus pressed his lips tightly together and laughed silently, never taking his eyes off the woman draped over his body. "We've all night, my dear. My bed awaits you."

"Severus?" Hermione asked, turning her head to rest on his chest again. Something things were easier to say if you didn't have to look at the person.

"Hmm?"

"I... Well, I just wanted you to know that I've been thinking about you lately. I've been thinking about you a great deal, actually. And I can appreciate this...you know, the sex...for what it is, but I want you to know that I would have never come here tonight if I didn't want... you know, more."

His warm arms wrapped tightly around her, and his voice rumbled in his chest. "I know exactly what you mean. Let's bathe and discuss this further in bed."

"This wasn't just sex for you, then?" She cringed at the blatant hope in her voice.

"Well, it certainly was sex, but I would be lying to you if I said I had no designs on something a bit more long-term with you."

Hermione looked up at him in shock. "Really?"

"Yes." He gently pushed her off so he could stand on shaky legs. "My tub is big enough for two. Would you care to join me?"

Her grin lit up the room as she took his extended hand and allowed him to help her off the floor.

*Author's Note: I just want to give a final (and HUGE) thank you to moonrevel and JenF for being such wonderful betas. I appreciate them both greatly. Also, thank you to all of the readers who have left comments about this fic while I have been posting it. You have all been so encouraging and fantastic that you make a girl want to write many more stories.*

*Author's Note #2: Because several reviewers asked nicely ::wink, wink::, I have attached an epilogue to this fic.*

## Epilogue

*Chapter 9 of 9*

After catching Hermione reading a romance novel, Snape urges her to write her own and offers to edit it for her. He doesn't think she'll actually do it, though.

The little girl stuck her lower lip out and blew a puff of air upward. Her dark bangs fluttered in the small gust and resettled against her forehead, out of her eyes for the moment. Being only seven years old, she was still several years from attending Hogwarts, but her quick mind was impatient for the stimulation this new schooling would provide. Of course, her parents had taught her the basics of magic already, but school just seemed like so much more fun than sitting at the kitchen table with her dad and his many cauldrons.

She had found a box of her mother's old school things tucked away in the back of her parents' closet. She thought she might be able to sneak away one book at a time without either of her parents being the wiser. As she dug deeper into the box, she came across a pile of loose parchments—notes, equations, even old shopping lists in her mother's neat handwriting. Buried beneath it all was a plain, white envelope.

Absently chewing on her lower lip, the girl opened the envelope and pulled out a stack of parchments, her mother's handwriting all over these as well. A cursory glance over the first page told her that these weren't notes, but a story.

"Anna!"

The girl turned around, clutching the parchments to her chest when she heard her mother's stern voice at the closet door. "I was looking for books," she responded, dropping her guilty eyes from her mother's gaze.

"It isn't polite to go through my things without asking first. What is that you have there?" her mother asked.

Anna shrugged. "Just a story. Is it yours?"

Anna watched the color drain from her mother's face and knew she had gotten herself into even more trouble.

"Hand it over, Anna," her mother said.

With a sigh, the little girl did as she had been told and gave the stack of parchments to her mother just as her father appeared in the doorway.

"What's all this fussing?" he asked.

"I was looking for books," Anna said, appealing to her father. He was much more lenient than her mother.

"Give the girl some books, dear," he replied, looking at his wife. "At the rate she's been reading this summer, she's surely exhausted the lower shelves of the library."

Anna watched her mother tuck the mysterious parchments under her arm. "When you'd like to borrow something, you should ask first. Do you understand me, Anna?"

She nodded eagerly at her mother, keeping an eye on the parchments that had been confiscated. "Yes."

"Now," her mother said with a smile, "you may gather all of the books you've scattered across my closet floor and take them to your room. If you'd like to read them, they are yours." She knelt down beside Anna and playfully tucked the girl's glossy, black hair behind a dainty ear.

Anna grinned broadly as she organized the schoolbooks into a tall pile on the floor. She just managed to carry the leaning tower out of the bedroom and down the hall to her own room.

"Why are you upset, Hermione?" the father asked when his daughter had left.

"That was close. I told you we should have burned this, Severus." She held up the parchments and waved them in his face.

Severus snatched them from her hand and glanced at the first page. Just as it had with his wife, the faint color drained from his pale face when he recognized the manuscript from so many years ago.

"Did she read it?" he asked with trepidation.

"No, I don't think so. I caught her just after she found the envelope."

"Thank Merlin," he mumbled, looking down at the abandoned romance novel penned by his wife. Hermione watched a sly smile tilt the edges of her husband's lips up. "I haven't seen this in ages."

She couldn't help but return his smile. "I hid it well. At least until Anna decided that our closet was an excellent place to hunt for books."

Severus stepped closer to her, forcing Hermione further into the deep closet. "Perhaps it shouldn't be hidden. Perhaps we should frame it. It does kindle fond memories in me, you know?"

"Where in Merlin's name would we hang it, Severus? In the hall by the door? I hardly think that would be appropriate." She placed her hands on his chest as he used his body to push her against the hanging robes near the back.

"In our bedroom, of course. I could spell it to resemble a painting. Perhaps something atrocious like kittens playing in a field of sunflowers. No one need know this was what initially fueled my desire for you." His voice was soft and deep in her ear as he held the loose parchments up to wave them by her head. "You never did finish it, you know."

"Why would I finish it when the first three chapters gave me what I wanted?"

She felt Severus lips brush over her cheek. "And what was that?"

"You," she replied with a muffled giggle. Coming to her senses, she made to push him away again. "Severus, Anna could come back in here at any moment and see us..." Hermione's voice trailed off when her husband's warm lips traveled down her throat.

"You gave her books, and she's your daughter. She'll be locked away in there for hours. You worry too much," he mumbled against her skin. Without a second thought, he kicked the door to the closet shut and captured her lips in a passionate kiss.

*Author's Note: This is for everyone who asked for an epilogue. I don't normally do them, but this little scene popped into my head, and I couldn't resist. Because DH is nearly upon us and I wanted to get this posted straight away, I didn't have it beta-ed. My apologies to the unfortunate TPP mod that has to pick through my measley nine hundred words for the myriad of mistakes that are no doubt there. Thank you to everyone who has reviewed and left me encouragement. I know I've been missing-in-action the last couple week and have not responded to reviews as I usually do, but I promise I will get around to it when life calms down somewhat.*