

# May Flowers

*by inna\_chy*

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*Chapter 1 of 1*

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It isn't mine. Just a harmless bit of fun without profit.

Thanks go to a wonderful and very patient beta by the name of songbook99 and to Potter Place for the inspiration, no matter how unintentional it was.

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Hermione sat in shock as Ron brandished a large bunch of garish flowers, the pungent odors clashing nearly as badly as the colors. "What are these for?" she asked hesitantly. Everyone in the sitting room of number twelve, Grimmauld Place was watching in fascination.

"I thought you might appreciate them." He beamed. "You know, as a token of affection."

"We've already discussed this, and my answer will not change. We are not going to date again. Ever. *No*, Ronald. No, no, no, and again *NO!*" She frowned as she began to stuff her mountains of paperwork and reference books into her already bulging bag.

"I know, but I thought a gift to show you how much I like you might help. You know, to help soften you up before I ask you to dinner," Ron countered, completely missing how Hermione's face darkened at his words. They had discussed the subject of dating often, despite her continued refusals. "Sweets for the sweet!"

"That's 'sweets *to* the sweet,' you prat. Really, if you insist on continuing to overstep that boundary, you could at least paint a prettier picture than that!" she snapped. "I am not some shrinking 'May violet' and if that's what you're looking for, I suggest you give Lavender another go. She's just silly enough to buy into that sort of rubbish and take it as a compliment."

"How can you be insulted over someone bringing you flowers?" Ron asked incredulously.

"Urgh! You truly are daft, aren't you?" she hissed as she swung her bag onto her shoulder and stomped out of the room, ignoring the confused looks on all but one face.

Once the door had been firmly closed behind her, Ron looked around in dismay. "What was that about? I thought flowers were supposed to butter up a girl when you want to ask them something."

"Perhaps the next time you give a woman flowers you should take into consideration who you will be presenting them to. I doubt that most well read women will consider it a compliment if you compare them to a woman who willingly drowns herself. Granted, most women would be slightly put off if their beau, of sorts, unintentionally murdered her father in a fit of psychotic rage, but really, do you see Miss Granger committing suicide as a result? If anything, she would castrate the bloke with the blunt end of her

wand," Snape scoffed. "Also, given that the phrase you uttered was a quote from Queen Gertrude as she deposited flowers on Ophelia's corpse at the time of her burial, coupled with the history of flowers being used to help cover the smell of decaying flesh, there is the slightest of possibilities that she inferred you were unhappy with her scent."

"Rubbish! She's just moody is all," Ron groused. "Besides, it isn't as though *you* would know anything about giving flowers to a girl."

A slow, nearly lecherous grin slid across Snape's features as he stood and gathered the papers from his meeting with Shackbolt. "I believe I shall take that as a challenge, Mr. Weasley, and I shall prove to you that a woman of Miss Granger's intellect cannot be swayed with schoolboy charms."

Without another word Snape stalked from the room, his robes billowing out behind him, leaving the others to look on with curiosity and concern.

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Severus scowled at the four young men sitting around the table at Grimmauld Place as they continued to scoff at the bundle of gangly flowers clutched in his hand.

"Even we wouldn't have the gall to bring a handful of weeds to a girl we liked," Fred laughed.

"Bad taste, that is," George finished.

"They are not weeds," he growled, only to be met with a howl of laughter.

"Snape, flowers are supposed to be pretty and delicate," Harry chuckled.

Any other conversation was cut off as the front door snapped shut. "We're back!" Hermione called, leading the way for a flushed Neville and Ginny. "The church is reserved, and we got the supplies we needed to finish Ginny's dress and send out the invitations."

"Oi! Hermione!" Fred hollered back. "Snape brought you a present!"

The brilliant smile that had lit Hermione's face momentarily fell into that of shock as she spied the bundle of flowers. "Oh, Severus..." she breathed, reluctantly taking the offered gift. With a carefully neutral expression, she examined the twig-like stems spotted with long, thin, wilted brown leaves, each one topped by a half dozen sickly yellow flowers marred by ugly, black growths. The sheer white ribbon had been carefully wrapped around the entire length of the stem, not one petal or leaf having been caught under the gentle pressure, and ended in a long looping bow at the bottom.

The four at the table looked on in amusement, Ginny in confusion, and Neville in awe, as Hermione caressed the ribbon. "It's really them?"

"Yes."

"You said no."

"After a great deal of consideration, I realized that your arguments were valid," he returned.

"I... I don't know if I can now."

Severus' features hardened, the anger clear. "My apologies, Madam. Had I known this was no longer desired, I would never have made the proposition," he said coldly. "I will not make such assumptions again in the future."

Hermione's free hand snapped out and firmly grabbed the loose sleeve of his robe as he stalked past. "Severus, please..."

"As I have said, I will not make such assumptions again."

"It's just that I can't do it on my own, but you... You can help me. Please? I've wanted this for so long, and I'm tired of lying awake nights, completely frustrated, thinking of the possibilities."

Ron took a breath to argue that Hermione could do just as well without Snape when Neville thumped him firmly on the back and shushed him, though the indignation of Hermione's submissive stance was well rooted in the majority of the population observing the exchange.

"You said you'd do it without me if necessary."

"It's impossible for me to reach completion by myself. You know that after watching me end in failure so many times. Please, Severus. Just think, you can show me just the right way to wet the pollinium with my maiden's dew, and you've always liked my wrist movement when I worked your glandulas. But if people find out I even tried to reach my ovaries and failed, it would be disastrous, not to mention the stigma... Please, Severus?"

"Very well," he sighed. His put-upon air was rather hard to maintain given the pinched expressions at the table, only one of which was from amusement. "If you are finished here, I suggest returning to Hogwarts as soon as possible. There are quite a few preparations to make before we begin, and it will not do for your next cycle to interrupt the proceedings until we're fully involved."

"Thank you! I'll meet you in your rooms." With a soft squeeze of his arm and a half wave to her friends, Hermione rushed from the room to gather her things, the flowers cradled carefully in the crook of her elbow.

Once the door had closed behind her, Severus turned to address his audience. "And that, *boys*, is how you give a woman of Miss Granger's ilk flowers." He smirked before turning on his heel and stalking from the room.

"Are they... Are they..."

"Yes, they are definitely returning to Hogwarts for a long, hot and sweaty night... of potions making." Neville laughed. Snape the colleague was far better than Snape the professor, and not nearly as scary after the first few years sitting around the faculty lounge.

"What?" The confusion among the others was quite clear.

"Well, you certainly don't give a girl *Ignis Pario Orchideae* to look at, now do you? They're ugly as sin, and very difficult to obtain. The magical properties are astounding, though, and with that many stalks, I would imagine Madam Apprentice is working on the creation of a very powerful potion."

"Huh?" Ron looked as though his head might very well pop from trying to assimilate the facts before him.

"*Ignis Pario Orchideae*, better know as the Fire Orchid. It's harvested from volcanoes on three very small Polynesian Islands, but the volcano must be active, and harvesting involves entering the crater; though, from the quality, I'd say someone risked their neck flying into the mouth of the main vent."

"But... but she offered to wet his perineum, and she's already touched his glans!" Harry argued.

"That's pollinium and glandulas. They are parts of the orchids' structure," he explained, carefully enunciating each word. "As are the ovaries and stigma. Really, didn't you learn anything in Herbology?"

"So, what's maiden's dew?" George asked with interest. One never knew where the next great idea would come from.

"Maiden's dew is just that dew gathered from petals of maiden's blush. It's one of the safest choices for working with very valuable and sensitive flowers."

"He gave her potions ingredients?" Ginny asked.

Again, Neville laughed. "No, love, he gave her a large quantity of very rare, expensive flowers whose sole redeeming quality is that if put to proper use, will result in a very valuable potion that Hermione has been working on since before she began her apprenticeship. Snape's right, though, for a girl like Hermione, the way to her heart *is* through her head."