

# Mediwizardry

by amsev

Hermione and Severus begin to notice each other in a *moreinteresting* manner one evening when Severus returns from a painful visit to the Dark Lord. Written for the SS/HG Summer 2007 Gift Exchange as a gift for karasu\_hime. Not HBP compliant.

## One-Shot

Chapter 1 of 1

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Severus Snape slunk down the darkened main hallway of number twelve, Grimmauld Place. His normal, sweeping stride was missing as he moved stiffly towards the main staircase. Looking down the hallway, he saw only one hurdle left before he would be in his room.

*Well*, he thought to himself, *actually two* as he contemplated the stairs further down the hall. However, the first one was the more daunting of the two.

He saw that the door to one of the minor drawing rooms was open with candlelight pouring out. With the War having slowly escalated in the years following Potter's Dream Team's graduation from Hogwarts, it became necessary to have a small infirmary at the Place to tend to Order members' wounds. While it wasn't truly open warfare yet, at least not such that the Ministry of Magic would soil its dainty hands getting involved, the guerilla skirmishes between the two factions, one light, one dark, could get quite bloody.

Snape gingerly pulled himself upright and donned his most daunting professorial sneer. He silently swept to the door the makeshift infirmary. Peering in, he saw a curly-haired head bent over a book on the small desk. He narrowed his eyes and smiled to himself as he noticed that Miss Granger appeared to be asleep with her eyes open.

Following graduation, Potter and the youngest male Weasley had, predictably, joined the Aurory. What had surprised Severus, as well as a few others, was that the brilliant-at-hex-wielding Granger hadn't followed them as well. She had instead decided upon a course in mediwizardry and had been accepted in the small school that was an adjunct to St. Mungo's. She was currently an intern in her fourth year of study there, taking not only the required coursework of that school, but was also enrolled in a grueling pre-med degree through the University of London.

Severus knew from their conversations that her dearest wish was to slowly blend newer ideas from Muggle medical practice into magical mediwizardry. She felt the two would complement and enhance each other. Some muggle practice had crept into common usage at St. Mungo's, but the witch was impatient with the creeping pace. She had reasoned that if she studied to be a Healer in both worlds, she could help move the process along.

"Miss Granger," Snape intoned in his best classroom voice, enjoying the fact that he managed to make the witch jump.

Hermione let out a faint shriek and glared the man in her doorway who was now smirking openly at her. "Professor!" she exclaimed. "You seem to take a most unseemly pleasure in startling me..."

"Now, now, Miss Granger, if you weren't so overloaded in your coursework, I know that I wouldn't have come upon you apparently attempting to sleep-teach yourself advanced biology. It's hardly my fault that you are so easily discomposd."

"Why you dratted..."

"Enough. Pax." He raised his hand. "I have returned, I am fine, I am going to bed. Good-night, Miss Granger." With that he turned as quickly as he could away from the door and proceeded down the hall.

Hermione stared at the empty doorway for a moment, replaying this most recent interaction with the grumpy Potions master over in her head. Damn the man, it was just like him to distract her from doing her job. In her mind she recalled his face. Well, he had looked... if not all right, at least no more tired than the rest of them. No, wait. He had been paler than usual, and there had been a slight sheen of perspiration on his forehead.

She leapt up from her desk and stealthily darted to the door. Her hand went to her hip as she contemplated the Professor standing, shoulders slumped. His pale, elegant hand was resting on the newel post of the staircase, as he hesitated to ascend the stairs.

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He had been wrong. The second hurdle, namely getting his weary self up the stairs, was proving to be more daunting than the first. He nearly jumped out of his skin and flinched painfully in response to that movement as a slender, feminine shoulder wedged its way under his arm.

"Damn you," he growled at the top of the brunette's head.

"Tsk, tsk, Professor. Consider this a bit of quid pro quo for your having nearly startled the piss out of me just a few minutes ago." Implacably, she turned, supporting the weary man and started a slow walk back to the infirmary.

Having achieved the infirmary, she propped him up against the examination bed. "There now, Professor. Just boost yourself up on the bed, take off your frock coat and the rest of your many layers of upper body clothing, and I'll suss out what's wrong and get you fixed up."

Hermione never knew just what kind of shape the valuable spy for the Order of the Phoenix would be in when he returned from a "visit" to the Dark Lord. She had seen him come back and sweep through her office with dour insouciance. She had also seen him panting shallowly in pain, recovering from the violent assault upon the body's nerves that was the Cruciatius Curse.

"What is it about medical caregivers that suddenly turns you into lechers forever demanding that your patients remove their clothing only to ogle their naked and vulnerable bodies?" Snape growled at her, wincing as he removed his frock coat. "I am perfectly fine." The word "fine" was emphasized with a bit of a snarl. Vintage Snape.

"Ah, Professor, still trying to prove that your snark is worse than your bite. I'll be the judge of whether you are 'fine' or not, so please finish removing your shirt. By the way, did I ever tell you what the word 'fine' is an acronym for in the Muggle world?"

"As if I could presume to stop you," he muttered as he slowly undid the cuffs of his shirt.

"FINE: Foggy, Insecure, Neurotic and Emotional."

"Ha-ha, Miss Granger, very bloody funny. Now let's get on with examination of yours, for which, by the way, I have decided to leave my shirt and vest coat on."

"Indeed." She raised her eyebrows in mock surprise. "We'll see about that." Before he could turn to continue facing her, the brisk young woman had moved around the examination bed behind Snape and was running her wand over it. He looked over his shoulder and glared at her.

"Well?" he said in slightly mocking tones. "It isn't anything that I can't take care of myself. I don't need a nosey mediwitch-to-be poking and prodding at me."

He saw that she had blanched.

"Severus," she asked gently, "just what did that slimy bastard do to you this evening?" She walked back around and unbuttoned his brocade vest, neatly avoiding his hands, which were attempting to bat hers away.

"No, no, don't twist yourself about so, I'll help you ease off your vest and your shirt." The concern that he loathed to hear now present in her voice. He was a grown man, for the love of the gods; he could take care of himself.

Hermione slowly peeled off his vest and flinched when she saw the blood adhering the fine lawn shirt to his back. She looked at him, her sympathy plain on her face. "I'm sorry, dear, but this IS going to hurt you more than it is me."

"I am not a 'dear.' It's yet another mediperversion that all patients are dwindled into 'dears' and 'sweethearts' and other equally noxious nicey-nicenesses as if we suddenly have become a pet or a child. I am not a 'dear,' and will never be one if there is breath left in my body to avoid such a calamity."

"Shh, pax, Professor. You're right; you're anything but a dear. However I do need to get this shirt off you before I can heal you. And it won't be pleasant."

"Get on with it, you silly chit. It won't be any worse that how my back got into its present state to begin with. Just rip it off." He attempted to suit action to words by abruptly sliding his arms out of his shirt, but then was forced to pause, eyes closed, as his back set up a protest.

"Severus, take it easy," she gently commanded. "Let me do that. I'll try and make it as painless as possible. In fact, why don't you drink this..." She handed him a vial.

"What is it? Poison?" He took it and looked at her, his large nose sniffing at the contents of the vial.

"No, merely a mild relaxant and pain reliever. Now, bottoms up."

He continued to look at her, suspiciously. "This is one of yours?" he queried, arching a brow at her.

"As a matter of fact it is. Now don't be scared of my little potion. A big Potions master like you should be able to just toss it back with nary a comment."

He smirked at her. "If this glop gives me the least bit of a medicinal hangover headache, I'll take it out of your hide. Bottoms up, indeed," he added as he tossed back the liquid.

She smiled inwardly at the unspoken respect in which he held her concoctions that he would query no further and simply swallow the potion. "All right," she said. "Please lie down on your stomach on the examination bed."

She helped him off the bed and assisted him back on, this time prone on his abdomen, prattling at him all the while to distract him from the pain. He achieved her request, his hearing becoming hazy as her voice faded in and out...

"What t'hell did you jush feed me?" he slurred as his eyes closed against his will.

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He came back to himself and realized that he was still in the infirmary, still lying on his stomach on the examination bed. However, he was shocked to find that the clothing covering his upper and lower body had disappeared, and he was now completely nude.

His back felt healed. He felt a cool, soothing balm being gently rubbed... into his buttocks?

Abruptly, he slewed his head around to see what was going on. He was infuriated to find Granger rubbing something onto his arse.

"What? What the devil?" he sputtered at her, attempting to lever his body up and away from her. Just as abruptly, he flattened himself back out onto the examination table, figuring the better part of dignity and valor would be to let her play with his butt rather than give her a voluntary showing of his bits.

She met his eyes ruefully. "Relax, Severus, I'm nearly done here. Just what the *hell*," her voice broke slightly on that word, "happened this evening? Besides your back, I'm showing slight muscle strain all over your body that's not in keeping with the Cruciatus. Did he make you lot run a 5K?" she quipped, trying to cover up her slip of tone.

She knew that the sarcastic man lying before her would rise to new heights of vitriol if she evinced too much sympathy at his condition. Somehow, and this continually amazed her, that no matter how injured Severus Snape was, if he was conscious, it followed that Severus Snape was sarcastic.

"No, nothing so strenuous," he quipped back. "The Dark Lord decided, since there were no Muggles available to torture, that he should set Lucius Malfoy and I to a bit of greco-roman wrestling for his entertainment. Since Lucius and I are fairly evenly matched and since he took away our wands for this event, it went on a while longer than it would have had we been armed. He became bored and decided to string us up and whip us a bit for failing to amuse him."

She flinched behind him. "Whip you a bit," she mimicked, striving for lightness. "How perfectly delightful."

"Miss Granger, I'm afraid you now know my hidden sado-masochistic tendencies and will have to be Obliviated."

"Ah, I see it now. Sadism by day in the classroom and a bit of 'whipping up' at night by the Dark Lord," she quipped back, her tone brittle.

Hearing the change in her tone, he responded, sneering, "Are you quite finished fondling my buttocks, Miss Granger? If so, I would like to cover them, and indeed the rest of my body, with my clothing. As with all medical places, it's a bit chilly in here, and I have no desire to freeze my arse off as it were."

"Why didn't you say something, you exasperating man?" She waved her wand at him, casting a warming charm over his body.

He felt much warmer, comfortably so after that, though he had to snark at that as well. "Trying to roast me now for your carnivorous, cannibalistic pleasure, I see. I think I preferred the chill to this inferno you have placed upon me."

She audibly ground her teeth. "Well then," she responded in a bright, hearty tone as she gently smacked one pale buttock before her. "If you remain like this for a few more minutes, you'll be as right as rain, though terribly overdone, and I do so like my meat rare. And such a fine, roast haunch it would have been. Pity."

He felt a blush creeping into his face. There was just no winning in the war of words against her this evening. He mentally blamed it on being under the weather...

...and looked up to find an equally blushing Miss Granger standing before him.

"Sir, I'm sorry. That last was... horribly unprofessional of me. You may file a complaint against me at your leisure."

If Snape were the sort to gape, jaw hanging open, he would be at that moment. Instead, a grin evil enough to make the stoutest heart flutter in fear formed on his face. He rather liked their small wars of words, but it wouldn't do to let her know that. *And her touch had been gentle and caring, a portion of his mind piped up, and quite surprisingly pleasant.*

"No, I don't think I shall file a complaint against you," the recumbent man purred threateningly. "However, I don't forgive, and I don't forget." He was pleased to see Granger pale a bit at this.

Letting her stew for a few moments, he changed gears. "Now, where are my clothes? I would like to see my bed sometime this night."

This sent her scurrying to bring his folded clothing over to him. "Sir, I'm sorry, but the shirt was damaged beyond restoring. I had to cut it off you... I did fix it," she hurriedly added. "But the blood stains proved to be irremovable." She held up the stained, restored garment for him.

"It will do," he remarked, his voice surprisingly gentle. She really was a remarkable witch, having fixed the shirt after she surely had cut it into multiple pieces removing it from him. "Now if you don't mind, I would like a bit of privacy to dress."

A few minutes later he swept out from behind the privacy curtain surrounding the examination table. "Thank you, Hermione," he said, smiling at her. He walked out of the room, leaving her staring at him, gob-smacked.

He had actually smiled at her. Smiled. At. Her. The perpetual grump had smiled a real smile at her. 'And what was worse,' her reluctant mind added, 'that smile transformed his long and somewhat homely face into something strangely attractive. Oh dear.' Thank goodness he wasn't so charming all the time, or her heart would be in serious danger.

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A couple of weeks passed before Hermione saw Snape again, and then it was across the crowded kitchen of Grimmauld Place for an Order meeting.

*Across a crowded room*, she mused idly, wondering what had attracted her eye to the dour man. She snorted, '*Some Enchanted Evening*' *this surely isn't*,' and grinned.

Snape was staring right back at her. And she was standing there, grinning like a looby. She tempered her smile and nodded in greeting. "Good Goddess, he'll reckon I've slipped a cog or two," she muttered to herself.

"Pardon, Hermione?" asked Charlie Weasley, standing next to her.

"N-nothing," she stuttered. "Just, er, thinking out loud."

Charlie smiled at her quizzically and looked away as Albus Dumbledore called the meeting to order.

A small smile remained on Hermione's face as she contemplated the impossibility of Severus Snape being cast as the romantic interest in a Muggle musical. Her smile disappeared when she realized that Minerva was now standing and explaining plans for the final battle...

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The final battle was protracted one. It lasted almost a month, and then, finally, Harry Potter killed the Dark Lord.

The aftermath was a bloody mess of injured and dead to sort out. The healers had their hands full. It was another two months before almost all the wounded survivors were healed. A few remained in St. Mungo's, Hogwarts, and Grimmauld Place.

Hermione sighed as she came out of her reverie. She was sitting in a chair next to the bed where Snape lay in a coma. Lucius Malfoy had wrought several unknown dark curses upon Snape before an Auror killed him.

Since that final day of the battle, Hermione and other healers had been researching just what curses had been cast on Snape. No-one knew for sure, and the consensus was to heal what they could and let him come out of the coma naturally. Not wanting to leave him unconscious and vulnerable to retaliation at St. Mungo's, Dumbledore had had Snape transferred to Grimmauld Place and into the care of Hermione.

So far he had shown no signs of waking. Hermione stood and levitated his supine body and laid some thick towels across the bed before lowering him down upon them.

She wasn't convinced that an on-going regimen of cleaning spells kept someone truly clean in the long term, so she had conjured up a bowl with warm, soapy water and a soft sponge.

With a flick of her wand, she removed Snape's nightshirt, leaving him bare. She draped a towel across his loins. It wasn't that she hadn't seen a naked man before; she merely felt that a person in a coma might, in some way, be aware of his surroundings. She wanted to do what she could to preserve his dignity.

Dipping a washcloth into the warm water, she wrung it out and washed his face, ears and neck. She switched to the sponge for his chest. She had just removed the towel covering him to wash his genitals when a low voice startled her.

"Pray why am I naked, again, I might add, in your presence Miss Granger?" Snape croaked at her, his voice rough from disuse.

"Oh, Goddess! You're awake." She hurried to replace the towel that had protected his modesty.

"Obviously. What is not so clear however," he paused to cough and clear his throat, "why I am only covered by a towel? I do not recall giving you permission for such liberties."

She blushed and spelled his nightshirt back on him. "I'm sorry, it's just that you've been out for so long, I thought that a sponge-bath... Well, anyway, let me do some readings to see if those curses you took are gone."

Waving her wand over the length of his body, head to feet and back, she saw that the tip glowed blue indicating no curse symptoms remained. As she paused holding the wand over his face, he batted it out of the way and struggled to sit up.

"Professor. Severus! Slowly, here, let me prop you up... no, you are in no shape to just stand up and walk out of here... **Merlin grant me patience!**" At this last, she caught him as his knees buckled from his attempt to stand, easing him to sit at the edge of the bed.

"Severus, you have been in a coma for several weeks. I did physical therapy work with you while you were unconscious. However, being bed-ridden for so long, some muscle atrophy has occurred. We'll have to take a bit of time before you can just leap up and go about your business."

"We'll have to take a bit of time? Am I to endure your presence for the rest of my recovery?" he snarked at her; however, there was a hint of a smile on his visage.

"Yes, Severus, you're stuck with me. Unless, of course, you would like to be moved to Hogwarts. Madam Pomfrey could oversee the rest of your recovery.

"No. I will not be flattered over and coddled, lying about in the school infirmary. May as well send me to St. Mungo's..."

"You want to go St. Mungo's?"

"No, you silly girl. I will stay here and suffer through your ministrations. At least here I am in a proper bedroom rather than some chilly ward with several other ill cretins to entertain me."

"I would never presume to call you an ill cretin."

Snape let out a bark of laughter and quickly turned it into a cough.

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The next several weeks found Severus slowly regaining his strength. He had become used to Miss Granger's touch in his physical therapy. Quite against his will, he missed that touch when she left him alone and wished she would linger.

He sighed. Obviously that wouldn't do. Granger could never find out he had developed a slight *tendre* for her. While he knew she would never hold him up to ridicule, he didn't want her pity either. He heard footsteps coming toward his room, grabbed a book, and quickly schooled his face into a mask of calm indifference.

Hermione knocked lightly and waited for his permission to enter. She was delighted in his fast recovery and had brought him a present.

At his "Enter!" she opened the door and stepped in. Snape sat in the room's wing-backed chair reading. Once again she found herself admiring his deep blue satin dressing gown. The color complemented his skin more than the black he persisted in wearing.

*Gods, she thought to herself as she caught herself admiring the wiry form and masculine breadth of shoulders before her. Can't let that slip, he'd have a hey-day with knowing... Damn it, Granger, may as well admit that you admire him for more than his intelligence and professional capabilities...*

Severus looked up and saw she was blushing... guiltily? He raised an eyebrow in inquiry.

"Ah, good afternoon, Severus. I have something for you." She showed him the elegant, black, derby cane she was carrying. "This will help you get around the Place. I think you're ready to see something other than this small suite of rooms."

He held out his hand for the cane and, with its assistance, stood. Why was she blushing and looking guilty about a cane? He filed the thought away for further investigation later.

"Good," he rumbled. "I would like to visit the Black Family library... the parts I warded to protect from curious eyes." He looked at her pointedly and started slowly walking towards the door to the suite.

It was her turn to raise an interrogative eyebrow. "You mean there's more to it than bound volumes of household accounts and an atrocious selection of Wizarding literature?"

"Indeed there is. You have lost some of your foolish Gryffindor curiosity and urge to rush in where you ought not. You may see the rest of the library."

Amused, she swept into a low curtsy. "Why, thank you, kind sir. You know of my bibliophilic tendencies."

"Yes. You really were a menace to yourself when you were a student, Hermione. I think you would have read the entire Restricted Section at Hogwarts, and suffered the consequences thereof, had we permitted you. Some of those books are Restricted for a very good reason."

"Yes, Professor, sir. I promise I won't touch anything without asking you first."

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Settled in the library, each with their own book, they passed the afternoon reading. Several stacks of books were before them on the library table as they sat side-by-side immersed in their reading.

"Hah!" An exclamation from Snape startled Hermione from her reading.

"What?" she asked.

He held up the Dark Herbal he was perusing. "The suggested preparation for aconite in here just might improve upon the Wolfsbane Potion."

Curious, Hermione moved in closer to look at the Herbal with him. As she was reading the spiky handwriting of a Black ancestor, she realized her thigh was up against his.

She could feel the warm strength through her robe.

She looked up to ask him a question to distract her from the effects of his physical nearness and found him staring at her. For once his lined face held no hint of mockery, just quiet amazement... and affection?

She was vaguely astonished to find that her hand had moved without her knowledge to cup the side of his face. She knew then that her face was reflecting back equal affection.

Slowly, as if to give her a chance to move away, Severus lowered his head to hers and met her lips in a gentle kiss. He pulled away and looked into her eyes again, hoping not to see revulsion now on her face.

Her hand moved from the side of his face to the back of his neck to pull his head down into a deeper, exploring kiss. She felt him slide one arm around her waist, as they awkwardly tried to turn more comfortably into this activity in the stiff library chairs.

A few minutes later, the sudden entrance of Minerva McGonagall into the library made them break apart like startled fifth years.

Minerva, who had looked equally startled to begin with, was now wearing a smile worthy of a cat that found the cream. She looked at them with frank curiosity.

"I-it isn't what you think," Hermione stuttered into rushed speech. "I would never abuse the trust placed in me as a healer."

"Relax, child. I know that you haven't crossed any lines you ought not have crossed," Minerva said. "One would have to be blind, though, not to have seen the attraction developing betwixt the two of you over these past few months. And a good thing it is."

She turned and swept out of the room, leaving the newfound lovers looking at each other in bemusement. Severus stood and took Hermione's hand and pulled her close.

After kissing her, he tucked her head under his chin and murmured into her hair, "Miss Granger, would you do me the honor of permitting me to court you?"

A slight nod and a long, firm hug were his answer.

*Fin*

A/N: A grateful thank-you to my beta reader, Missy, and to the kind soul over at the Gift Exchange who admined my story. Any errors in this, since then, are all my own.