

# Heartburn Hotel

*by Elisabeth*

On the road, Hermione and Severus have a literary encounter of a frustrating kind. A post-Deathly Hallows fic, so please don't read if you hate spoilers.

## One-Shot

*Chapter 1 of 1*

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Warning No.1: As this is post-Deathly Hollows, spoilers follow. If you don't like spoilers, please forget about reading this. Warning No. 2: It's also very silly. There, you were warned.

Not making any money from these characters. They're not mine. I'm just minding them while their mum is out.

The morning of July 22, 2007

The coffee cup hit the wall with a satisfying smash.

"Complete and utter tripe!"

Across the room, a ballpoint pen skittered off a desk and clattered on the floor, followed by a hiss of indrawn breath.

"In Merlin's name, Severus! One of us has to present a paper in two hours!" Turning toward her husband, Hermione was distracted by the impressive splatter blossoming upon the wall opposite the breakfast table.

With a grimace and a swift *Evanesco*, she restored the sand-colored silk wallcovering to its former elegant state. That done, she permitted herself a closer look at the man across the hotel room.

She heaved a long-suffering sigh, wordlessly *Accio*-ing the thick book with its lurid, sunset-toned cover from his hand into hers before it could follow the coffee cup to its doom. Only then did she slip into a seat next to him.

"Severus, I've told you and *told* you not to bother with – "

"What sort of a befogged brain produces such a load of absolute c – "

"Conjecture?"

"Deranged fantasy is more like it. I'll sue; I swear I will OWN that estate of hers in Scotland – I swear – "

"Oh, Severus, I don't think you have any more swear words left for this – and is there any point in upsetting yourself? It's not as if you can issue a writ. We both know there

are distinct disadvantages to tangling with Muggle libel law.”

Silence. Cautiously, Hermione poured him another cup of coffee.

“It’s her seventh book after all,” she said. “One grows quite used to it by now.”

“She hasn’t given you a snake for a cravat, Hermione.”

“True. On the other hand, she hasn’t married YOU off to Ron Weasley.”

Another silence, considerably less fraught this time. Hermione risked nudging a plate of toast and a pot of jam toward the refilled coffee cup.

At length, another sigh – this one from him.

“Potter finds this all quite amusing, no doubt.”

“Not really. He thinks the starkers-in-the-afterlife scene in Kings Cross is a bit embarrassing.”

This was rewarded by a sound rather like a rusty window chain being forced into action. Greatly encouraged, Hermione soldiered on.

“And imagine poor Luna. There she is, the creative force behind Wizarding Britain’s hottest ready-to-wear line, and in these books she’s going round looking like a complete frump. Radishes dangling from her ears! How awful!”

“Gurdyroots, weren’t they?” said Snape absently, diverted by the sight of the early morning light dancing through his wife’s irrepressible curls.

“For someone who claims to be allergic to these books, you’re uncommonly familiar with them,” Hermione could not help observing.

“The Anti-Nausea Potion helps.”

“Anyway, Luna’s absolutely sick about it. Honestly, Severus, she thinks you’re dead lucky you got the snake scene.”

“Well, dead, at all events.”

Hermione pursed her lips. “Fair point; that wasn’t the best possible phrasing – ”

“Hardly.”

“—But you must still admit, you’re redeemed in the end.”

“You make me sound like a pawnbroker’s ticket.”

Another sigh. (Sigh advantage: Hermione.)

“Oh, Severus. None of us is happy with the books, but what’s done is done – and a long time ago, now. Cornelius Fudge~~would~~ have to decide that dabbling in Muggle literary outreach initiatives might rehabilitate his reputation – it was our rotten luck.”

“Fudge!” spat Snape. “Why in hell’s name didn’t I hex him into oblivion when I had the chance? Think of the balls-up he left us with after the battle in the Department of Mysteries!”

Hermione coughed. “Order of the Phoenix.”

“Yes, yes, we both just got our alumni newsletters, but what does that – ”

“*Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix*” clarified Hermione. “The battle in the Muggle Book Five was in the Department of Mysteries. *Our* battle was in that recording studio just off Diagon Alley, remember?”

“Goddess, how could I forget – just think of the unearthly sound when that Stunning Spell of Bella’s hit the Vox Replicatio cabinet with the vintage Celestina Warbeck tracks. . . .”

They shared a deliciously reminiscent shudder.

“The Department of Mysteries made a more impressive story,” Hermione said, fair-minded as usual.

“Only to Muggles who haven’t heard unmixed Celestina Warbeck.”

Hermione gave an impatient *tch*, the effect of which was considerably softened when she settled herself on her husband’s lap, her arms around his neck.

“We’re splitting hairs, you know,” she said softly into his ear.

“Hmph.”

“Nobody cares what that person writes, Severus.” Her hands moved into his hair, drawing his head down to hers.

“Mmmm.”

“At least, nobody who really knows you – ”

“Ah.”

“—the way I know you,” said Hermione, although actually it was more of a sigh, and a few syllables were lost in translation.

But since the words had run their course, this really wasn’t cause for concern.

THE END

**A/N: I know, I know, another characters-critique-JKR story. Any resemblances to fanfics living or dead are completely coincidental, not to mention unbelievably mortifying. Hope it makes somebody laugh, if that's what they need.**