

Dinner Plans

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Fresh and Wild

Chapter 1 of 3

Hogwarts cuisine leaves much to be desired. The Potions master offers far more tempting treats.

She knew why he looked so sour during classes; taking over his class for one day had taught her that trying to prevent dunderheads from committing acts of grievous bodily injury while concocting potions was an exercise in frustration, broken only by moments of sheer terror.

What puzzled her was why he was equally sour during meals. At staff meetings he could be quite pleasant, but at the High Table he did nothing but snarl at his plate.

Then she saw him at the cheese counter of the Fresh & Wild in Soho, inhaling the fragrance of a ripe Cambozola.

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She watched as he selected a plump Brie, a Blue Stilton, and pure white, crumbly Caerphilly. He moved through the shop with an easy familiarity, barely pausing when his basket was filled to the brim, though he did take more care in placing each carefully selected item on the growing pile.

He was at the fish counter, having a piece of haddock wrapped, when he caught sight of her.

"You appear to be amused, Professor Granger."

"I was just wondering how you manage to cook in your rooms."

"I find that a Potions lab can serve a multitude of purposes."

...

"Do you come here often?"

One perfectly quirked eyebrow expressed his amusement. "Would you believe me if I said this was my first time?"

"What's a nice Potion master like you doing in a place like this?"

"Hoping desperately that you are not about to ask me my sign."

"Actually, I was hoping that you would ask me to share your dinner. The standard fare in the Great Hall is a bit ..."

"Drab? Heavy? Cloying? It is calibrated to young, uneducated palates."

“And here I thought it was the presence of the students that made you so grumpy at mealtimes.”

...

“I could make it worth your while.”

“What, precisely, are you offering?”

“For every meal you cook for me, I’ll cover one evening of your detentions.”

“Are you certain my cooking is worth such a high price?”

“Your potions ensnare the senses, your cooking could do no less.”

“Might your generosity have something to do with the shortage of volunteers to collect information for the catalogue of the school’s paintings?”

“You get out of a much hated task, the school board gets off my back, and we share a nice meal. Everyone wins.”

“In that case, you bring the wine.”

Perfect Pairing

Chapter 2 of 3

How to prepare for a date when Severus is on the menu.

Pairing wine with food is a complicated matter. To choose an appropriate bottle for an evening of gastronomical delight prepared by the skilled hands (oh, those hands!) of the Potions master will require forethought and an intimate knowledge of the menu. Hermione will have to spend long hours discussing that very important question with the chef. Of course, one simply can’t discuss such a non-academic subject in one’s office. There is nothing else for it; they will just have to meet in her rooms. Or his. Over tea. There might even be biscuits. If the discussion goes long enough, sandwiches.

...

She timed it carefully, knocking on his door to ask about their dinner early enough to expect a cuppa, but late enough that a generous tea could take them through the evening. *Two dinners for the price of one!* she thought.

“It will have to be Saturday, so I have time to shop for ingredients.”

She was just about to suggest asking for some sandwiches from the kitchens when he stood and made his excuses.

“Do you have to leave?”

“The Heads of all the Houses are required to be in the Great Hall between six and six-thirty each evening.”

...

Tesco’s best ought to be good enough. It was what she could afford.

She checked that the champagne was chilled and the Bordeaux appropriately warm before getting changed. Since Severus had to appear at the Great Hall, she would meet him there. That meant whatever she wore would be seen by the entire population of Hogwarts, though only two would know who it was for. So, robes over something sexy but tasteful. For Severus, it had to be black. The little black dress would do nicely. Hair down, for a change. Just enough product to tame the frizz. Minimal makeup.

...

Severus glanced at the clock as she entered the hall. She had timed it perfectly to allow her just long enough at the table so they could leave together. He smirked when he heard the bottles clink in her bag. It was an auspicious sign. A woman did not bring more than one bottle of wine to an intimate dinner party if she meant to keep her wits about her. Not that she needed bother; he had chosen a fully adequate, if reasonably priced, port that would be served with dessert if he felt that greater lubrication was called for.

After-Dinner Treats

Chapter 3 of 3

It’s what comes after the main course that makes a dinner truly special.

Waiting for dessert, Hermione made a minor adjustment to her look. Nothing obvious, just a subtle little shift of position on her chair that brought her hemline up that one,

critical inch. There was a slight, but noticeable, break in Severus' step as he passed by her on the way to setting down the *tarte tatin*, still warm from the oven.

"Would you like some pudding?"

"None for me, I'm quite full. You go ahead."

Tesco's offered a great deal more than just wine, and Hermione had been very pleased to find that they carried sheer, black, lace-topped, thigh-high hose.

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She shifted her chair around, closer to his.

"That looks awfully tempting." They both did: the man and the *tarte*.

"Shall I cut you a piece?"

"No need. I only want a nibble."

A single bite was duly segmented off and carried towards her waiting mouth. As he placed the morsel of pastry in her mouth, she closed her eyes, savoring the sweet apple and caramel flavours. Her tongue swept a few, lingering crumbs from her lips.

When I look, if he's watching me, I'll kiss him.

"Is there anything else you want?" he asked, his eyes dark with desire.

...

Getting lost on the way to the loo at three a.m., she accidentally found herself in the Potions Lab.

"Care to explain?"

"Wha? Huh?" He fumbled for his wand and cast an illumination spell.

Hermione was standing at the foot of his bed wearing nothing but a grin and holding ...

He smirked. "Is there a problem?"

"I was under the impression you had cooked for me."

"I did. Look. It says right on the package, 'cook at home'."

"It also says, 'pre-prepared meals'. That's not cooking, it's heating."

"You enjoyed it."

"Yes, but I will not be taking your detentions."

...

"If you don't cook, what were you doing shopping for ingredients at Fresh & Wild?"

"Piquing your curiosity, my dear."

"How long did you expect to get away with this little game?"

"Just long enough to get you into my bed."

"You know, I would be well within my rights to use you for hexing practice. Pretending to be something you are not in order to seduce a woman is very bad form. It is very lucky for you that your bedroom skills are superior to your culinary abilities."

"I was quite sure that you would see it that way."