

The Gift

by Southern_Witch_69

Hermione has a gift for someone, which makes Ron curious.

One-shot

Chapter 1 of 1

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Disclaimer: Snagging some characters of JKR's for a little snapshot.

This is written to amuse my friend amsev on her birthday. Hope you had a good one, doll!

Thanks go to ladyinthecloak for reading this over for me at last minute notice.

"I saw her wrapping something, I tell you." Ron's brow furrowed. "But it's been a couple weeks since Christmas. Who did she forget to buy for? Thought she got everyone, meself."

Harry shrugged. "I don't really care if you must know."

"Why not?" Ron asked incredulously. "What if it's something for you... or me? Wouldn't you want to know?"

"Or maybe it's for someone else and none of our business," Harry said, finally looking up at Ron's excited face. "I thought you two called things off anyway, what three months ago? Why would she be buying you something else?"

"Maybe she feels guilty about giving me that bloody boring book for Christmas. Muggle sports are all right and all, but I don't like their non-moving pictures in their books. The only thing you can really do is read them."

"Books are for reading, Ron," Harry said with a smirk.

"Yeah, but in Wizarding books you only have to skim, don't you? The pictures show what the text says usually."

Harry shook his head. "I doubt it's for you... or for me."

"I think I'll go pop in to say hi. Maybe there'll be a name on it."

"You do that," Harry said absently. "I'm going over to the Burrow to pick up Ginny. See you later then?"

"All right."

Ron crept up the stairs, hoping Hermione would be in the loo or something so that he'd have a moment in her room on his own—maybe happen to read what name was on the present. However, once outside her cracked doorway, he frowned, seeing her sitting on her bed. Without knocking, he opened the door and strode in. "What are you

doing still lounging about? Not going to come down to eat?"

"I'm eating out tonight."

"Oh. Where?"

"Hogwarts."

"Why?"

She blushed. "I am meeting with Minerva to talk about that librarian post that might be coming up if Madam Pince decides to retire."

"I thought you didn't want to do that."

"Well, I've changed my mind. It's not so bad, is it?"

"But you wanted to stay at the Ministry."

"That was when we were together. I feel I can do something else for now and something I want to without worrying about interfering with you." She smiled kindly. "I'll be staying at Hogwarts if this works out. I couldn't have done that with us still together."

"You don't have to leave, Hermione. We've been getting along fine these past few months."

"I know that, but I think my life is now taking a different direction."

"Who's that present for?" Ron blurted suddenly.

"Sorry?"

"The one you were wrapping earlier. I saw it."

"Were you spying on me, Ron?"

"No, of course not. I just looked in while on my way down. If you didn't want anyone to see, you should have locked your door," he said defensively.

"Fair enough."

"That's it? Who's it for?"

"None of your business."

"That's what Harry told me!"

"What, he's spying now, too?"

"Er—"

"This is exactly why I need to leave this place. No matter what I do, you two will always be over my shoulders and trying to influence my decisions!" She bounced up, snatched her cloak, her handbag, and the wrapped gift, which was hidden in her wardrobe.

"Is it your time of the month or something?"

"Arse. Get out of my way," she said, storming by him.

He scratched his head and muttered, "So she didn't get me something to replace that book. Ah, well... I expect it's something for McGonagall, trying to suck up for the job and all that." It bothered him a little that she didn't feel she could confide in him. Maybe he'd gone about it wrong, and though they might not be together anymore, he still considered her as his Hermione. It hurt that she wanted to move on and that she'd pointed out that they were finally going their separate ways. He hadn't thought of it that way.

"Hello, Miss Granger," Severus Snape said as he met up with her in the darkened corridor. "On your way home?"

"I... well, sort of," she said with a smile. "I just finished my meeting. Thanks for your help the other day. I appreciated it."

He nodded. "Not a problem. Pince hasn't been herself for some time now. I only had to help her remember how studious you were as a student."

"What's happened to her? I mean, really happened?"

"I believe she's getting Alzheimer's, but Poppy doesn't think so. They think she's too stressed, what with family problems and other things going on."

"How very sad."

"Indeed." He shifted from one foot to the other. "Well, I'll see you later then, and I look forward to seeing you join the staff."

"Thank you very much." She panicked as he turned away. "Wait."

"Yes?"

"I..." She reached into the pocket of her cloak and pulled out a small package that had been delicately wrapped in light green, shimmering paper. "Happy birthday, Severus."

The shock in his eyes that faded to pleasure pleased her, giving her hope that it hadn't been a mistake and that she'd not misread him.

"Mi... Hermione, thank you, but truly it wasn't necessary," he said, even as he reached out for the box.

"Oh, don't open it yet," she said, suddenly feeling embarrassed and stepping back. "I'll just... go now."

"Wait," he said. "Would you... If I promise to not open this until you leave, would you like to come down for a drink?"

She smiled. "All right. I'd like that."

"I would, too... like that, that is."

Hermione's bright smile never faded as he took her arm in his and led her down to his dungeons. She knew that things would finally go her way for a change.

SW's Notes: Very short, but just something pleasant to say "Happy Birthday" to my friend! Cheers!