

Revival

by *potionmastersmistress*

Snape is alive – only he doesn't believe it. He lays in a deep coma at St. Mungo's, his mind locked in an afterlife of his own making. Occlumency shields prevented the best mind healers from intervening. He's considered a hopeless case – but there's this irritating know-it-all with a crazy shaman trance plan and a boy-who-just-won't-bugger-off.

Chapter One: It's All in the Hips

Chapter 1 of 4

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Disclaimer: I got bored with my dollies and decided to play with J.K.'s. I promise to put them back... eventually.

Many thanks to my fantastic beta for helping me forge across those giant, annoying plot holes, and without whom, my grammatical errors would cause much squick!

Chapter One It's All in the Hips

Eyes that refused to open. Lips that refused to part. Hands that refused to reach out and touch anyone, anything. He almost wished he could move, if only so he *could* confirm that this was just an eternal hellish nightmare and not a prolonged hellish existence. If only he could eradicate this ridiculous, bothersome notion that he was still alive, lying somewhere unbeknownst to him, sedated in a mental confine of his own making...

Preposterous. This just had to be hell. Or Hades. Or Voldemort's idea of a bloody cocktail party. He had to be dead, and this had to be demonic torture. Whatever it was and wherever he was, he was certain it was meant to be torture, this endless descent into madness. Yes, hell would be just like this, just like the only thing that he secretly had feared for years and years; his true self was being compromised very slowly, but very surely.

The walls he had built round his mind over the span of his life were very solid, very strong, and very heavily warded against intrusion. Having been a double agent against the most terrible wizard of all time, and just being an extremely secretive person in general, this particular mental attribute always had been and still was crucial to his survival.

He thought he could hear voices in the distance, far from the inner-sanctum-turned-prison that was his mind. Why couldn't he move? Why wouldn't his captor in death just show himself and be done with this imprudent game of mental hide-and-seek? Even in death, he was glad that his mind was still his own and his soul seemed to be in his body, but that didn't make much sense, really...

This was just torture, plain and simple, and Severus Snape knew how to deal with torture. But this maddening arrangement confused him, for he felt alive in what he thought must be death.

He could smell something faint and familiar very distinctly...was he actually *breathing*?... but his olfactory senses were just as weak as he was. The intake of air in and out of his nose seemed to be the only thing he still had control over in this eternal blackness, though it was quite exhausting. It did not make sense, of course, but then this

could be because he was simply dead, and all of this was all cruel punishment for his past misdeeds. He forced himself to take a lengthier, more painful and controlled draw of air through his nose and immediately pinpointed that familiar scent...vanilla.

Vanilla.

Lily.

His heart began to race; he could feel his breath quickening as she flashed in brilliant, intense moving pictures inside of his mind:

Bright auburn locks of hair flailing in the wind as she soared off of the swing-set that summer day, deliciously green eyes smiling at him from over a textbook in the Great Hall, her fingertips brushing his as she passed him a hurried note in a crowded corridor, her perfectly fair skin glistening in the moonlight as she stroked his hair softly in comfort, and him nuzzling his nose into her soft, sweet locks, trying to find that elusive field of vanilla that had to have been hiding somewhere beneath Lily's soft, sweet hair...

Vanilla...

Lily...

A sudden crashing, booming noise tore him away from the precious memories he thought he would never relive again...

His inner walls were most definitely being breached.

Severus began to panic. He had let those memories go! He had released them into the musty air of the dark, dirty shack after Nagini had gone in for the kill, after Voldemort had left him for dead. He had grabbed that snooping brat Potter, the bane of his existence and the reminder of his failures. Severus had forced a confused Harry to look directly into him. As he had immersed himself in those glorious green eyes, he was blanketed by the memories he fought his whole life to suppress and remember at the same time. He had been momentarily lost, even in what he knew must be death, in the eyes of brilliant green, exactly like Lily's. He had known it was time then, and had let all of those beautiful, haunting treasures of her seep from his mind. He had allowed them to leave his walls as he had slipped into darkness, into the unknown...

So how the bloody hell did they all get bloody back in?

Thunder and lightening boomed and thrashed around his mental walls. What was this magic? He could feel it pulsating all around him, hear it push and thrash against his mind. Was he truly dead? Was this strange, turbulent recovery of his most sacred memories what it meant to be crossing over? Had he been too scared to fall behind the veil until now, too weak to join the other side? Was this Lily, calling to him to join her? Was this how it would truly end, could it be he for whom the bell was solemnly tolling?

Or perhaps... perhaps this was Voldemort toying with his mind. Perhaps Potter had failed, perhaps the Dark Lord reigned victorious over all and was playing with his food before he ate it. It was Voldemort. He was tormenting him. Somehow, he had recovered the abandoned memories and now reveled in his own fallen servant's emotional weakness.

Fear gripped him; he knew his hold on his central self was weakening now and despised himself for it. Cracks began to run up his inner walls at a slow, impetuous pace.

Falsified memories played over and over in his mind, silent and fake as an old Muggle movie. Memories he created, memories he hated. Cracks everywhere, like snakes slithering up dark, ancient walls. His walls. The barriers he had spent his whole life perfecting... were obviously somehow imperfect. He could feel them, see them, and yet they were slowly deteriorating. He did not have control. Severus Snape was, for maybe the third time in his life, absolutely terrified.

He knew this was real, though the thoughts swirling within his mind refused to seep out. His body was in utter refusal of life, but his mind ticked like a freshly wound clock. Unfortunately, it clicked and ticked with lies and memories that he longed to Obliviate from his mind.

Tick, tick, tick... his Master's eyes, red and despicable. The terrible creature he thought once to be great, brilliant. The mad entity that killed his beloved Lily. He saw himself taking the Mark, kissing his robe, creating his dark potions. Voldemort.

He could hear incoherent chanting from far away; someone was calling to him. His mind clicked even more rapidly than before.

Tick, tick, tick... his merciful captors eyes, twinkling and watery, eternally the brightest blue. He had twisted him, manipulated him, and saved him. They both had seen an opportunity and a friendship within each other. He saw himself sitting in the Headmaster's office, complaining about the stupid Boy Who Lived for the hundredth time, while the worn looking man had smiled at him and threatened him in one single look. He saw the dead, cursed hand, and the sad, lost look in his employer's eyes. He saw himself, calmly pointing his wand at the old wizard and hating him with every fiber of his being for using him, for leading him so blindly for so long. Albus.

A beat of a drum, a shake of a rattle, and a low, primal moan. He could feel the hands of his mental clock spinning out of control.

Tick, tick, tick... his love's eyes. Her eyes, and that sweet, fresh vanilla, surrounding him once more. He saw them sitting together on her roof the summer after second year. He was crying. His terrible father had once again beaten his mother into unconsciousness and chased him out of the house. He had run, straight to her. She had listened closely and she had soothed him, comforted him and caressed him. He had kissed her then, slowly and sweetly, and nuzzled his face into her hair, calmed by the scent of fresh vanilla. She had never spoken of that kiss again, but he never had expected her to, anyway.

Suddenly, the spinning stopped, his mind emptied, and something incredible happened. He could see a strange woman in his mind, one he could not recall from any memory he had ever had. It was like he was seeing someone else's thoughts, as if someone was projecting them into his mind.

He saw she was in a room, and she seemed to be dancing around a bed. A man was moving slowly alongside the walls of this strange room, beating a drum and shaking a rattle. They were dressed in an extremely strange manner, and they both seemed to be focusing all of their magical energy on a pale figure lying in the bed. It was then that he realized the angle from which he was seeing this scene...he was the figure in the bed! His blood began to pound in his veins as he realized that this was really happening. He wasn't dead. He was lying in a ruddy hospital somewhere, being subjected to the ridiculous sounding and strangely sensual magical practices of this strange culture of wizard.

Now that he had a grip on his surroundings, somewhat, he tried to survey the scene with a careful eye. The man against the wall was moving very awkwardly, and his shaggy, black hair was covering his face. The man had an exotic looking wreath atop the crown of his head. And if Severus wasn't imagining things, he was... naked?

Death suddenly seemed like a *fantastic* option. What in Merlin's name was going on here?

Severus shifted his focus to the strange woman and was both shocked and pleased to find her in a seemingly equal nude state. Her breasts seemed to be covered only by hanging garlands made of some sort of vine. Vanilla?

In his mind, he could see her move towards him slowly, as if she were trekking through molasses. A young, tan woman with wild hair, eyes closed as she twisted her body in intricate patterns all around his bed. She smelled like Lily. She was beautiful, familiar, intriguing. She was... No. Impossible.

This gorgeous goddess was that ridiculous embodiment of word vomit, that infuriating babble mouth Granger?

There was a sudden burst of hot, indescribable pain. Severus was affronted by an abrupt surge of sound, but could not believe what he was hearing.

"HARRY, YOU FUCKING IDIOT! WE ALMOST HAD IT! HOW MANY TIMES HAVE I BLOODY TOLD YOU? **IT'S ALL IN THE HIPS!**"

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Chapter Two: Exploding Girl

Chapter 2 of 4

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AN: Next chapter will have some lemons for everyone :). Damn exposition!

Chapter Two: Exploding Girl

A figure clad in nothing but a dangerously small and almost transparently nude pair of boxer briefs with a wreath of African lilies atop his head stumbled up onto his feet from the floor.

"Hermione, I'm sorry, alright? I'm not a bloody drag queen, I can't move like that!"

Sweat was rolling down Harry's forehead and dripping onto his nose, and he looked utterly exhausted, if not a tad bit ridiculous, especially since he was still clinging tightly to a small drum and a rattle. Hermione did not seem to notice any of this, though.

"You aren't *supposed* to move your body like I am, Harry! You're *supposed* to let your skinny little *hips* lead your clumsy little feet and not fall over onto your irritating little *arse!*"

Hermione was dressed in a scandalous pair of nude coloured knickers and a thin, tan bra. Her hair was bushy and wild, sweat pouring from her body. She stood in the middle of what used to be Severus Snape's personal study and was now the emptied, barren, steamy, and inventive recreation of a shaman's earthen ritual quarters.

She muttered a few obscenities under her breath as she turned upon Harry with an exasperated scowl on her reddened face.

"Well, fuck!" Harry exclaimed. "It's hard to keep everything straight in this ruddy ritual! I'm not doing magic with my wand, you know. This is all ridiculously strange, and I'm really trying!" Harry pushed the flower wreath off of his head and sank back onto the floor, which was covered in rich, red soil.

"I *know* you're trying, Harry, but you'll just have to try *harder* not to fall over like that again!" Hermione wiped the sweat off of her brow with the back of her hand and fussed with her unruly hair for a moment. "How hard is it to match your sidesteps with the counter beat of your drum, anyway? I've got to make love to the bloody air, channel all of his most private memories *back* into his ruddy head, and focus on projecting all of my *maginto* Sev... Snape at the same time. Not to mention this difficult, complicated little spell I have to chant over and over. There is this whole business of breathing, too, you know..." Her tone was scathing, and her eyes were glassed over with anger. One glance at her in this state caused Harry to sink even deeper into the dirt.

She took in a deep sigh and peered warily down at Harry, who looked rather put out and surly.

"Oh, I'm sorry, Harry," she said in a placating manner. "The strain of this has been getting to me. It's just that I think I felt some terrific progress today! I think I actually managed to force all of his memories back into his mind! I could feel his walls more closely today; they are getting weaker, and if we had kept it up a little longer, I think I could have revived his senses."

Harry pulled Hermione down next to him, putting his arm around her shoulders for comfort.

"This is a good thing, Hermione. This is what we've spent over two months preparing for. You spent six weeks searching for this information, and the staff at St. Mungo's spent four months trying everything they could for Snape. Did you expect us to succeed right away? He's really closed himself in quite skillfully. I'll try my absolute hardest tomorrow, but I think we both need to call it a day."

He's right, you know, she thought dejectedly. Hermione took another deep breath, closed her eyes, and placed her weary head on Harry's shoulder. She couldn't believe that she was sitting in the dirt, panting heavily, practically *naked*, in Severus Snape's household with said homeowner lying like a piece of broccoli on his own small bed. With Harry, of all people. He was as good as her brother, and they were dancing around their former Potions master's still form with nothing but their skivvies on. It all seemed unreal, ludicrous. But it was going to work; she knew it in her bones.

She took another deep breath and thought about how she had gotten here.

After the chaos and tears at the end of the Final Battle died down a bit and everyone began to clean up the rubble throughout the grounds, Harry said he was going to the Shrieking Shack to retrieve the remains of the former Potions master. When she saw Harry running back and heard him yelling frantically about finding nothing but a puddle of blood, they together started to commission all who were capable of moving without immense pain set out with them to find Severus Snape.

Three hours into the search, without so much as a trace of Snape's remains anywhere, an owl flew up to her. It was carrying a letter to the survivors cleaning up at Hogwarts. Well, she was a survivor, so she took the liberty of reading the letter to herself and Harry. They were adults now, and they definitely earned the right to selective information. The letter was from St. Mungo's, and it detailed a former staff member's most peculiar arrival.

"Severus Snape arrived at St. Mungo's in the middle of the night via phoenix, with almost all of his wounds completely healed." she read aloud. "The phoenix departed nigh a second longer than it had arrived..."

"It was Fawkes! I know it, it had to be!"

She nodded hurriedly at Harry and continued to read.

"...And we brought Mr. Snape in for treatment. The official care of Mr. Snape is funded by the newly appointed Minister, and our Mind Healers would appreciate the expert opinions of some of the witches and wizards who were involved in the Final Battle." The letter detailed his condition, stating that he was in an Occlumency-induced coma.

Harry looked at her in disbelief. She let out the breath that she was holding, and she pulled a crumpled piece of paper from her pocket.

"We can go ourselves, Harry. I have this paper I could make...oh, we're wasting precious time that Snape doesn't have if we keep chatting, or if we go off scurrying about the grounds! I think that..."

Harry cut her off with a brief wave of his hand. "Who should I alert?"

"Send off your Patronus to Ron and Ginny, tell them to alert the others, and let's go. I'll make a Portkey. I'm not sure if it is safe to Apparate."

When they arrived at the hospital and rushed to the specially warded room Severus was being kept in, some of the best Mind Healers, and even some average ones, were trying their hardest to bring him out of his self-induced coma. Her eyewitness account had not helped because his state was not caused by a dark curse or rebounded spell...it was his own doing.

After four months of no progress, St. Mungo's wanted to release his case. After pleading with Kingsley Shacklebolt a great deal, the hospital allowed the care of Severus Snape to be handed over to Harry and her.

The hospital had refused to let them keep Severus at the hospital, but a particularly friendly, young Medi-Witch had tipped Harry off on some fantastic charms, which Ginny nagged him about to this day. Nevertheless, Harry gained some valuable information on how to Transfigure a normal household room into safe, healing environment for a person as personally afflicted as Snape. Seeing as Harry never, ever wanted to go back to Grimmauld Place, and the Burrow was too small and populated as it was, there was really only one option. So, along with the help of Ron, Ginny, Luna, and Neville, they moved Severus to his home at Spinner's End, where they all made a pact to do everything in their power to bring back the man who had sacrificed so much.

Harry of course felt a particular responsibility towards reviving his former professor and ordered countless numbers of books from Wizarding communities all over the world for all of them to research. Luna and Neville were in charge of tracking down all of the research materials, people, or magical artifacts that could possibly be helpful to their cause. Ginny and Harry were in charge of sorting out all of the different volumes and treasures. She, being the most studious out of the five, manned the research, records, and applications of everything useful they could find. Ron opted to work with Neville and Luna, as he wasn't too keen on loads of research.

For about a month everything ran rather smoothly; everyone worked together quite harmoniously. After that fourth week was over, though, Ron and Neville started to lose both hope and interest in their combined work. The ceremonies, the invitations, and the opportunities that their bravery and success had wrought proved much more appealing than pouring over dusty old tomes and tracking down vials of Madagascar periwinkle and musk mallow.

One evening, as Luna was updating the spending records and Harry, Ginny, and herself were all discussing and researching the possible uses of the valerian root, Ron and Neville came bursting into the house laughing. Neville ran over to Luna whilst Ron made his way over to her side, across from Ginny and Harry. He had a lopsided grin on his face, and his hair looked rather ruffled.

"We've been thinking, Neville and I, that we need to let loose a bit, step back from this depressing Snape business, and, uh, have a bit of fun, yeah?"

Harry and Ginny looked up at Ron blankly. She continued shuffling through her scrolls of notes.

"Bloody hell! Don't you want to go out for a bit, have a drink or two? You lot never leave here! Never want to go out with Neville and me! Why did we fight so hard to be free if you just want to stay cooped up in this fucking little house all hours of the day?"

She could tell that Neville and Luna stopped their intimate discussion and were looking in horror upon their friends, dreading another row. Ginny peered sideways at Harry, who was gnawing his lip away to keep from biting Ron's head off.

She, on the other hand, continued her research and acted as if Ron wasn't even there. After all, this little scene had happened many times in varying manners over the past few days.

Ginny stood up slowly and walked her brother quietly into the farthest, darkest corner of the living room. She and Harry both turned towards the siblings and listened very hard. It was a rather small home, so they had no problem hearing and seeing the entire exchange.

Ginny narrowed her eyes and whispered biting to her brother.

"Ron, not all of us were freed. You know that everyone else has given up on Snape and you know that the man I love and the woman that you claim to love want desperately to right this! So please stop being so ruddy selfish! They both need us!"

Ron let out a small chuckle. He narrowed his eyes right back at his little sister and leaned very closely into her face.

"Maybe what they need is a reality check, Gin." He turned his back on Ginny and walked briskly back into the kitchen, arms spread wide.

"THIS ISN'T GOING FUCKING ANYWHERE, HARRY! YOU HAVEN'T MADE AN INCH OF PROGRESS, 'MIONE!"

She had jumped to her feet to push Harry back into his chair and immediately rounded on the red-haired boy she was slowly growing to despise.

"YOU have a lot of bloody nerve, Ronald. We all made an agreement. We OWE that poor man our lives!"

Ron laughed loudly again, pulled her swiftly into his arms by her waist, and began to whisper roughly into her ear.

"YOU owe ME the time with you that I deserve! I've been in love with you since my second year at Hogwarts, Hermione! I was always too stupid to see it, to see you the way you are. You're beautiful, amazing, brilliant! I love you! I want to LIVE my life with you! Voldemort's gone, we've all been through hell and back, and you just want to fuss about all day, searching endlessly for a non-existent cure, giving sponge-baths to Snape!"

She tried to tear herself out of Ron's grip, but he strengthened his hold. She turned her face defiantly towards his and started to push against his chest.

"Let GO of me, Ronald. NOW."

A low, fearsome growl escaped the throat of a fuming Harry, who she saw reach a shaking hand towards his wand pocket. Neville began to pull Luna warily towards the

door as Ginny made a mad grab into her own wand pocket.

"PROTEGO!" Lucky for everyone, Harry's angry Stinging Hex was deflected into the kitchen cupboards by Ginny, sending Harry flying into the kitchen table and Ron and her stumbling backwards. She thought she was about to escape from Ron's constraining grip, but he only clutched her to him more tightly to keep her from falling. Neville and Luna took the opportunity to slip away, and Ginny stalked angrily over to help Harry up.

"Harry, are you mad? You could have hit Hermione! There are better ways to settle this!"

"I will NOT let him continue to act like a selfish fucking animal!"

Ginny laughed and picked a few slivers of wood out of Harry's hair.

"So what were you just trying to impersonate? A bloody Healer?"

Harry grabbed her hand and pulled himself up beside her. Ginny and Harry both gave her a quick, concerned look, and then abruptly stared daggers into Ron's skull.

Harry pointed his wand at Ron. Ginny soothingly stroked Harry's back.

"Leave her be, Ron. If you don't want to help anymore, if you think this is all daft, then just go."

Ron didn't take his eyes off of her. He loosened his grip and began to softly stroke her hair.

"We torture ourselves day and night, night and day, when we all know in the back of our minds, that there's nothing left for us to do. Thirty days we've been slaving away over a lost cause. Wake up, Hermione. You've got a strange fixation with Snape. He's all you ever think about! You've forgotten about us."

She knew then that the perfect moment in the Room of Requirement months ago had been nothing more than a fluke. She was mistaken by believing that her childhood love had finally grown up. He was just as selfish as he was when they were in school. He still didn't understand her, and she thought that he never would.

She mustered up all of her strength and pushed her raging emotions deep into her heart. Now was not the time to become Hermione, the Exploding Girl. Coldly, she raised her chin and looked straight into Ron's eyes.

"There is no 'us', Ronald."

"OI! Put some ruddy clothes on if you're going to fall asleep all over each other"

Hermione was startled out of her dream-like reminiscing by the annoyed exclamations of Ginny Weasley.

"Well, it's better than actually being naked, which is what this ritual called for before I modified it. Walk around in your knickers, if it would make you feel better!"

The girls laughed a little, and Hermione nudged Harry in the ribs.

Harry jolted awake beside her and jumped onto his feet, dusting off his legs and back.

"Sorry, Ginny my love. Hard day."

"Obviously."

"Ugh, I smell like Mundungus. Fancy a bath, then, dear? I'll let you scrub my back, yeah?"

Ginny smiled despite herself and wrapped her arms around the filth-covered man in front of her. "Hah-hah, but actually, yes! You don't mind if we take the bathroom tonight, Hermione?"

Hermione smiled at the happy couple in front of her. She felt a pang of jealousy and wished silently that she had someone to bathe with after a long day. *Stupid Ronald*, she thought to herself, *you just couldn't think about anyone but yourself.*

"No, I'll just do some quick cleansing charms before I check Severus' vitals and go off to bed. Goodnight, you two!"

"Goodnight!" they chimed simultaneously and then walked out arm in arm towards the bathroom, giggling.

"An Imperturbable and a Silencing Charm, please!" she called after them, chuckling.

Hermione quickly used her wandless magic to siphon all the soil off of the ground and into a large stone chest in the corner of the plain, white room. She performed a quick Scourgify on herself, and then directed the wreath of African lilies and the vanilla-vine garlands to the empty end table.

When she turned to look at the still, pale form of her once cruel and menacing teacher, she found herself overcome with the desire to free him from himself.

She quickly grabbed a green robe from the closet and covered her now cool and dry form. She walked over to the bed where Severus was and sat on its edge. Leaning in closely to his face to brush away a stray strand of hair, she smiled and whispered very softly, "Goodnight, Severus. I am so very close to freeing you from your chains. I can only hope that you won't Oblivate yourself as soon as you realize where you are... Hopefully you will realize that we all care about you. I know I do. I've grown very fond of you, and yes, I know that I've really just been talking to myself for months since you've shown no signs of comprehending our... my..." She grabbed his hand and squeezed it tightly. "Oh, just let me in, Severus. Let me in, so you can let go."

Hermione leaned down, placed a soft kiss on his forehead, and then tucked him deeper into his covers. She held her finger underneath his nose to check for steady breathing until she was satisfied that he was in as normal a state as humanly possible. She then pulled out a tissue from her robe pocket and transfigured it into a small, overly cushioned cot.

"I'll be right here, if you need me, Severus. Sweet dreams, love." Even as it slipped out of her mouth, she seemed a bit startled. "'Sweet dreams, love'? Merlin, thank the Gods you can't hear me right now. I...yawn...sound like a foolish schoolgirl again..."

Hermione laid her head on her fluffy white pillows and drifted swiftly off to sleep.

If only she had known that this night Severus hadn't merely gained back a few lost memories. He had reacquired one of his senses...his sense of sound.

Chapter Three: Waiting is the Hardest Part

Chapter 3 of 4

Snape is alive – only he doesn't believe it. He lays in a deep coma at St. Mungo's, his mind locked in an afterlife of his own making. Occlumency shields prevented the best mind healers from intervening. He's considered a hopeless case – but there's this irritating know-it-all with a crazy shaman trance plan and a boy-who-just-won't-bugger-off.

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A/N: Much, MUCH thanks to my patient readers and my even more patient and encouraging beta, whom I cannot sing the praises of atop a fictional mountain until the reveal. Without her understanding and friendship, I might have just left this story in frustration and defeat. I cannot wait to type her name in gigantic, bold font with tons of little < 3's all around it!

I'd also like to thank xxx for her encouraging email. However long ago it might have been, it has been sitting on my shoulder up until the completion of this chapter. Thank you for your support.

RL drama and writer's block don't mix well. I've got a rough plot of where I want this to go, and while it might not be complete by the 20th, I know where I want to take it and pledge now to finish it. Hugs and snark to all!

< 3- YOU-DON'T-KNOW-WHO

Chapter Three: Waiting is the Hardest Part

Moans could be heard softly from what he presumed was his bathroom.

How revolting.

Severus was in no way amused by his current situation. He was lying helpless in his own bed, in his own home, while being subjected to the most ridiculously stubborn and annoying teenagers he had come across since his years as a student.

He was still unable to decide whether or not death would have been a more formidable option, especially after his brief peek into the type of magic that was being used in an effort toward his revival. He didn't exactly have a firm grasp on all the particulars, but had gathered enough information from the brief observance of the ritual and the conversations overheard to regain some form of mental stability.

He had been able to piece together that the joint efforts of Granger, who was now lying in some sort of magically procured bed beside him, along with Potter and the youngest Weasley, who he could now hear becoming increasingly more intimate with one another in his bath, were what had allowed him his memories and hearing back. He was still absolutely helpless...it seemed that the know-it-all was having a more difficult time with the ancient magic she was using than she had hoped.

Some small part of him was grateful to the nosy chit for taking an active interest in assuring he received not only the utmost care in his condition, but the application of intelligence and research from the only living person that he felt had the ability to take on such a daunting, near-impossible task. The larger part of him, however, despised her for making such a fool of him, taking her precious friends and herself along for the mortifying ride.

He was a grown man, and it seemed he was essentially lying in an open grave of his own making. His shovel had been an intricate web of half-truths and lies, of seclusion and privacy. This realization was quite a blow to his ego.

He knew his wounded ego and his pride were what forced that part of him to despise her and her cohorts. He knew that it was silly and irrelevant, not only because of his current standing in the world, but everyone else's as well. It was just...

His pride was something he held very dear.

As a child and a young adult, his pride was constantly stripped away from him. His weaknesses and flaws were regularly exploited for the pleasure of his bastard of a father or for the entertainment of his peers. He grew into a man who relied upon his pride, upon his reputation, and upon his intelligence to earn the fear and respect of everyone who encountered him. So in a way, Severus valued his pride almost as much as he valued his life, for as a grown man, he could not see one without the other.

But he had to admit that this witch Granger was a force to be reckoned with. She was also a force, it seemed, that would enjoy a thoroughly good reckoning from her former Potion's master.

Severus smirked inwardly. He recalled that particular thought, the most enjoyable projected mental image of her tan, moist skin as she danced and chanted around his sickbed, around him. Her breasts had swayed, her hips (*When did the girl get hips?*) flared provocatively as they turned and gyrated in a fashion that caused him to think some rather inappropriate thoughts about his former pupil.

But what did she expect from him if she ever succeeded with her far-fetched plan? Did she expect him to open his eyes and sit upright, calling out her name with praise and longing seeping from every syllable? Did she fancy herself the next bloody Florence Nightingale? Was he to fall into a boneless heap, kissing her tiny little feet? Was he to profess his undying love and devotion to her brilliant self? Was she just becoming emotionally attached to him and his condition because of those damn memories he had let go? Did she believe him to be some sort of brooding turtle, hard and impenetrable outside yet soft and mushy inside?

And what was all nonsense about "again" earlier? *Sweet dreams, love?* He found it near impossible to believe she had been harboring romantic feelings for him during her tenure in school. He had made it his exclusive responsibility to be as cruel and demeaning to the Golden Trio as possible. Was she a masochist? Did she enjoy all of the degradation and belittling? What the hell was she going on about, and why the hell couldn't he stop analyzing it?

He wished that he knew, wished that he could look into her eyes and unwrap her mind, layer-by-layer, memory-by-memory. But... he could never really look into Hermione's eyes and violate her mind. She really was doing so much for him. Potter as well. He had seen Ginny also, but where was the other annoying Weasley? Why was Hermione lying in his sleeping quarters, on a transfigured cot, instead of in another room, with Weasley or any another man? Why in his vicinity, why near him? It would seem as if she must genuinely care.

As the sound of Hermione's breathing steadied into a sleepy rhythm, the sound of those two brats in the bathroom rutting like wild pigs grew increasingly unhinged and shrill.

Harry Bloody Potter. Shagging a Weasley in his bathroom. His troublemaking father would have been so proud.

Hermione stirred slightly and muttered something incoherent in her sleep, and he wished that he could open his eyes and look at her. He'd always appreciated his sense of

sight, the ability to visually decipher one's surroundings, but he had also known that he could never depend on his eyes alone. He was both smug and grateful that he had trained himself to use each of his physically given senses to their absolute fullest potential, for if he had an untrained ear, he would be going just as mad as he had been before he discovered his true predicament.

He heard Hermione give out a sleepy groan and turn to her side, turn towards him. He wanted to see her gentle, slumbering form. He wanted to see her blanket hugging against her delightfully nubile, curvy body. He wanted to watch her bosom rise and fall with each breath, he wanted to undress her with his eyes, etch her forever into his mind, just the way she was.

She had sounded... different. She had sounded like a woman. And she had looked like a woman. A goddess, even. Her magic had radiated power and wisdom far beyond her years, far beyond his belief of her capabilities. Through the war, through the flames, she had survived and grown into a beautiful, powerful woman.

And if there was one thing that Severus had always been attracted to, it was power. He had seen it in Lily, Lucius, Dumbledore, and Voldemort. And he had been taken in, for better or for worse, by every one of them. Would he allow himself to be taken in again, if he emerged from this prison? Would he gravitate towards another powerful force, towards another intense attraction?

Silly old man, he thought to himself. You're just as foolish as you ever were. Her power, was it? Not her tight little ass?

Severus again felt the urge to sneer. He was most definitely not a young buck anymore. He had lived through so much. He was surprised that he was still alive, if he was honest with himself. How had he survived Nagini's bite, anyway?

"Mmm..."

She was awakening. It would seem that the continuous cries of pleasure coming from his lavatory had not disturbed him alone.

"Mmm... whatstha... Harry...? Fucking Merlin..."

Severus would have smirked if he could have.

Fucking Weasley is more like it..., he thought to himself.

He could hear Hermione sit up abruptly and grumble several angry obscenities to herself. She walked purposefully over to the door and flung it open. A flood of piercing grunts and groans flew into the room, along with the ever-pleasant sound of flesh slapping against flesh. Lovely.

"HARRY POTTER! DID YOU DEFEAT VOLDEMORT WITH YOUR COCK? OR DID YOU FORGET HOW TO USE YOUR **OTHER** WAND NOW HE'S GONE?"

A sudden silence filled his home. And for the first time in many, many years, Severus Snape wanted to laugh. He wanted nothing more than to throw back his head and howl with unbridled mirth.

Chapter Four: I Feel It All

Chapter 4 of 4

Snape is alive – only he doesn't believe it. He lays in a deep coma at St. Mungo's, his mind locked in an afterlife of his own making. Occlumency shields prevented the best mind healers from intervening. He's considered a hopeless case – but there's this irritating know-it-all with a crazy shaman trance plan and a boy-who-just-won't-bugger-off.

Disclaimer: I got bored with my dollies and decided to play with J.K.'s. I promise to put them back... eventually.

A/N: I love my beta for being my beta! Her wonderful suggestions really made this chapter pop, and you can thank her for the addition of the extra special Snape-ness. She's a terrific lady that goes above and beyond. May many-a-Snape appear in her dreams!!!

< 3- YOU-DON'T-KNOW-WHO

Chapter Four: I Feel It All

Hermione had too many thoughts swirling around her head to just lie down and try to sleep after the whole "wand" episode with Harry. It wasn't an incident that was entirely new to her, of course, but it always seemed to take away her ability to sleep.

Harry and Ginny were so very much in love and free to shag each other senseless without the looming possibility of death weighing on their hearts and minds. It was a concept Hermione understood all too well. But even still, the thought of Harry shagging in the bathroom made her a bit crazy.

She was jealous, which was reasonable, but more than anything, she was wistful. Harry and Ginny had made it, so far, and she couldn't see them ever having as earth-shattering a blowout as Ron and she had. But they seemed to understand each other on a deeper level than Ron had ever...

Hermione couldn't help but sigh. Ron had always been her choice, through all of his flaws, and through all of their differences. Through all of her schoolgirl crushes, it was Ron who she had let crush her the most. She had thought the war would have forced him to grow up a bit, if only a bit, but was ultimately proved very wrong. She had given him a chance for redemption after he had abandoned Harry and her in the middle of their quest, and his bravery at Hogwarts before, during, and after the final battle had caused her heart to swell and her body to ache with love and need for him.

Shame that it hadn't lasted.

As she lay upon her makeshift cot, atop her terry-cloth blanket, she allowed herself, for the first time in weeks, to really feel the loss of her long awaited and short lived love affair with Ronald Weasley. And to feel that loss, she had to do the hardest thing, harder than giving in to her sorrow. She had to remember when it was good. She simply had to allow herself to remember what she would miss.

Hermione and Harry had returned dejectedly to Hogwarts from St. Mungo's. Their Potion's master was in the best of hands and was, against all odds, still alive...if only

partially so. But so many more of their allies, their friends, their loved ones... They had been taken along the way, through the veil, never to return.

As they walked through the gates, they could make out the forms of McGonagall, Sprout, Pomfrey, Flitwick, Slughorn, Trelawney, and Vector rushing to the sides of the wounded and levitating the remains of the fallen, covering them with colored cloths...white for the side of Light, and black for the Dark. Several Aurors aided in this process, and both Harry and she were compelled to stop and to take in the sheer volume of the dead and wounded scattered across the grounds.

Inside the Great Hall, the scene was no less grim. Ron and Ginny were with their family, none of them speaking, but mourning in their own ways over the bodies of their dead son and brother, and the dead friends that were strewn about.

After several long hours of repair and remorse, of impromptu funerals and memorials, the Weasleys, Harry, and Hermione flooded back to the Burrow. No one spoke a word as they filed in through the grate.

Once everyone got inside, there was a slight pause in which no one did a single thing but breathe, wipe the soot off of their clothes out of habit, and look around at one another. Then, Molly and Fleur went straight to the kitchen. Arthur, Bill, Percy, and George went and sat around the kitchen table, more worn and exhausted looking than Hermione had ever imagined them.

Harry and Ginny started to make their way upstairs, hands interlaced, and Ron decided to follow suit, clasping her hand tightly, but gently, in his own.

They sat on the floor in Ron's room, all of them. No one seemed to want to break the silence first. Throats cleared, sighs escaped, sniffles arose followed by great gasps of air... but no one seemed able to speak. Hermione knew if she opened her mouth, she would be opening the floodgates of an emotional waterfront that she did not want to cross just yet.

She glanced down at her hands, and she didn't recognize them. They were chapped and bleeding, caked in dirt and blood.

She knew the blood was not hers alone.

No ink stained her fingers for the first time in years.

Her eyes began to well up, and even though she tried to fight it, tears began to roll silently down her dirty cheeks.

She could hear Harry sobbing; he was nearly retching. She looked at him and felt a tremendous sadness mixed with an overwhelming happiness. Ginny was holding him tightly, cooing and stroking his disheveled black hair. After a couple of minutes, they rose silently and made their way out the door, to what she assumed was Ginny's room below.

She turned to Ron after Ginny had closed the door silently behind them, turning and locking her eyes with Hermione's for a moment, and saying so much without making a single sound.

He was gazing at her, right beside her, his leg touching hers. He reached out a calloused, masculine hand to her face, wiping away a tear that had gathered at the corner of her eye with his thumb.

His speckled face had lost so much of its careless innocence. He sat there, regal and strong, like a true Gryffindor. Her heroic lion. Her Ronald.

Her heart wanted to burst.

She opened her mouth to speak, to try and verbalize her pounding heart and her intense sorrow. She wanted to tell him how much she loved him in that moment, how brave and wonderful he was.

She couldn't speak.

Her voice remained hidden, and a smile crept across Ron's face.

"You have dirt on your nose."

It took Hermione all but a half of a second to catch on as he reached his hand towards her face again, brushing against her moist nose.

"Did you know? Just there."

And then it all came up at once. She began to smile, sob, and clutch onto Ron as if for dear life, as if she were drowning. She kept telling him she was sorry she was always yelling and she loved him, and a thousand other things that had been on the tip of her tongue for a couple of years short of a decade. He just held her in his strong arms until her sobs turned into sniffles, listening and stroking her impossibly bushy hair.

"C'mon, 'Mione. Let's get cleaned up a bit."

She kept opening her mouth to protest, but before she knew it, she was standing in the lav, staring at her reflection in the mirror.

She couldn't believe how much older she looked, let alone how much older she felt.

She noticed that she was pressed against the sink.

And he was pressing into her back. His hands reached under her torn blouse and pulled it over her head. She remembered every second, every breath, as they undressed each other without words, without questions, and without a single sound but for the clothes they were shedding dropping to the ground. And then he was naked. She was naked. And they stared at each other long enough for their skin to become bumpy and taut from the chill.

Should she kiss him? Should she move? She was frightened. She couldn't think straight. And he was looking at her as if he had never seen her before...

"You're beautiful, you know. Magnificent."

Her mouth gaped open and then snapped abruptly shut. He smiled, and nervously placed his hands on her waist, staring into her eyes through the mirror. Her ribs seemed more apparent than ever before under his long, thick fingers. His hands made her feel frail, weak, feminine, beautiful...

"We're both filthy." She managed to murmur softly, unable to focus on anything but his piercing eyes and his hands gripping her waist, caressing her skin. He pulled her close and ran his fingers along the outline of her frame.

"Let's wash it all away."

She cried quietly, hugging her pillow, thanking the gods that Severus couldn't hear, and when she was done, she laid there in silence until the sun came up, just staring at the still form in the small bed.

As she got up to go into the bath to wash her face and brush her teeth, she continued to gaze at him.

"You look so desolate."

What was it about that man? Ever since the lot of them had banded together on the quest for Severus' care and revival, she had begun to develop a sort of... relationship with him. A friendship, of sorts. She knew it was silly and one-sided, but that never stopped her from thinking of him as a very dear friend and person in her mind. She had always slept in the room with him, even when Ron had still been there. She knew that was part of the reason that they had been brought to the breaking point, but she couldn't stand the thought of him lying alone, as though dead, in his own home. She also couldn't silence that little voice in her head, the voice that secretly wanted Ronald to be Severus.

Severus was really the ultimate hero to her. He was, if she was perfectly honest with herself, her ideal mate. He sought knowledge and respect, he was full of power and pride, and wasn't that what she really wanted for herself? Ever since she first learned she was a witch, she had felt this surge of satisfaction, of purpose, and had made it her goal to become the strongest, smartest witch she possibly could. And from what she knew of him, hadn't Severus done the very same thing as a young wizard and as a grown man as well?

She thought less and less of the differences in their age and circumstance and more and more of the common characteristics the two of them shared. She also thought more and more of his pale, scarred flesh. It was so fragile looking, but she knew it to be thick and resilient. She thought of his long, dark hair, not a sign of age in it. She thought of his defined bone structure; his regal cheekbones and nose made him look like some sort of brooding prince... And then there were his hands, his beautiful hands, clasped atop his chest, rising and falling with each steady breath. She dreamt of his hands more than anything else. Sometimes they were just writing furiously, other times they were carefully preparing and concocting potions. Sometimes they were rubbing his temple, or buttoning his robes. And sometimes, they were caressing her flesh.

She smiled at the still form of Severus Snape as she recalled a particular favorite of hers...

"I wonder, Miss Granger, if you enjoy this arrangement?"

Severus stalked into the kitchen, catching Hermione quite by surprise.

Harry and Ginny had gone off to the cinema for the evening, leaving her alone in the house with what she thought was a comatose Severus. She had been chopping up some basil, tomato, and cucumbers, preparing to make a salad to go along with the salmon she was baking for her dinner. The last thing she expected to see was her virtually lifeless patient walking and talking! And had he taken the time to put his frock coat on?

"Professor... I... I... How...?" She dropped the knife and backed into the counter clumsily as he came at her in a fury, grabbing her about the waist and pulling her close to his chest.

Her breathing became ragged as he ran one of his hands down the small of her back until it met her arse. She squeaked in surprise as he squeezed her firm cheek, causing the tall man to smirk. His skin wasn't sallow at all; it was actually rather... luminous, especially in the candlelight.

"I asked you a question, witch. Do you enjoy this arrangement? Do you enjoy having the bat of the dungeons powerless in your hands?"

All she could do was gape up at him. Aside from the disbelief of his commanding presence, how was she to respond? She still couldn't believe that he was up and moving. Because he was quite literally, "up" and moving...

"Professor, I swear... I just..." He spun her around, both of her small wrists clasped in one of his large, strong hands. His other hand found its way up to her mane of curls, grasping and pulling at her hair so that her head jerked back, exposing her neck to him.

"I'm far from your professor now, witch." He brought his lips down to her neck and brushed them teasingly against her flesh. A small moan escaped her lips, and she felt herself involuntarily arch her back against him. A deep, fearsome chuckle whispered across her skin, and she shivered.

"I feel a shift in power coming your way, Miss Granger."

He spun her around, pinning her back against the counter and tearing open her robe in one swift motion. She watched him as his eyes raked over her exposed breasts and torso, lingering on her lacy black knickers, drinking in the sight of her body. She reached her now freed hands tentatively up to his shoulders.

"I'm far from your student as well, Severus. You should call me Hermione."

His black eyes glittered ominously as he leaned forward, bringing his lips dangerously close to hers.

"Do you want me, Hermione?"

Her eyes fluttered closed as she breathed a soft affirmative to his question, being too distracted by the pale fingers running along the thin outline of her knickers to respond with words.

A low growl, and he pounced, capturing her lips with his in a flurry of desire and dominance. Hermione slinked her arms around his neck, toying with his raven hair while their tongues thrashed and crashed against each other. His hands kept moving along the skimpy material of her knickers, his fingers torturing her with their languid trails.

She broke the kiss with heaving gasps, reaching down to take off the offending garment, but Severus seemed to have other plans for her. Their eyes met, and Hermione finally understood what it meant to swoon.

He recaptured her mouth, constricting her wrists again with one hand and unceremoniously ripping the tender lace from her body with the other. She knew she was conquered, and she rather enjoyed the thought of it being at the hands of Severus Snape.

His fingers now buried in their destination, which was hot and wet with wanting, Hermione saw her chance to take off the clothes that still clung to him. She wanted to see him, to feel his bare flesh against hers as they twisted and writhed in their passion.

When she had undone but one single button, Severus stopped his explorations of her hot centre and glared daggers into her.

"I am in control, woman!"

And then her robe was gone. He spun her naked body around and plopped her belly down onto the counter, so that her arse was sticking up in the air and her feet were dangling just above the ground. As Hermione turned her head back in shock towards Severus, he dropped his trousers and slowly stroked his rather large cock.

"So long I've lain in that room, hearing you whine and cry over a stupid boy of no consequence." He gave her bottom a little smack, hard enough that she cried out, but soft enough that she did not break the connection their eyes had made.

"When I am done with you, my little pet, the only thing you will be crying out is my name!"

With an animalistic howl, he slammed into her tightness, again and again with absolutely no abandon. Hermione could feel a wet heat spreading all throughout her body as she dug her nails into the countertop and screamed out his name, trembling in her release.

A loud snore from the living room brought her back from the lovely depths of her desire.

She laughed softly to herself. She knew his re-entry into the Wizarding world would not be anything like her dreams, but it was always fun to fantasize. She merely wished that she would have a friend, that she would still have the conversationalist and companion that she procured in her mind. She was especially frightened of him simply sitting up and Obliviating her, but knew he would most likely sit up and chastise her.

She had come to rely upon his company over the months. She would talk to him all through the night, read to him from the vast variety of tomes they had unearthed, and just keep him company, as silly as it sounded. And that was all she really hoped for upon his revival, that companionship she felt remaining in tact. Of course, it would be nice to have a man as complex and domineering as Severus shag her senseless every night...

She smiled to herself as she wrapped her thin robe tightly around her body.

"I simply cannot wait for you to sit up and tell me what a meddlesome witch I am, Severus Tobias Snape."

Hermione finished her morning routine, she headed to the kitchen to make some breakfast for herself and her friends.

She saw that they were snuggled together on their bed, transfigured from the sofa. She assumed they would be quite ravenous after what sounded like an extremely vigorous romp, so she whipped up a few more eggs than usual, and seared up a few extra sausages. The smell alone should be enough to pull Harry from his slumber...

Just when Hermione began to think that Harry and Ginny were never going to buck up the courage to pop their heads out from under the covers, a flurry of red hair emerged.

"Do I smell eggs, dearest?" Ginny dropped her voice an octave and pursed her lips into her best mannish-grin. Hermione laughed gleefully, setting down her spatula and putting on a coy, girlish face. She loved these silly, funny little family games they played. Every time they took on different roles than the last, and Hermione supposed that she was the housewife today, which she felt suited her in the little apron Ginny had bought.

"Yes, darling!" she responded sweetly. "After last night, I though we both could use a hearty breakfast."

Harry took that opportunity to jump out from under the blanket, spreading his arms wide and opening his hands towards Ginny.

"Dada!"

They all erupted into laughter, Harry and Ginny falling all over each other, and Hermione clutching at her sides desperately.

"Come over here, Mother. I think I deserve a spanking!" At that, Hermione pulled a serious face, rolled up her sleeves, and ran over to the bed, jumping into the playful tickling and spanking that Ginny had began to administer. They laughed, tickled, and tackled each other until they all fell over onto the floor, stacked like hotcakes with Harry in the middle.

It was times like these that she realized how young they all were, and how much she truly loved her friends. She had never felt the kind of carefree camaraderie that she felt with Harry and Ginny at this point in her life, not even with Ron during their brief affair.

"You know," Harry began in a serious tone, "I know a hundred wizards who would kill to be the meat in a Ginny-Hermione sandwich..."

Ginny shared a knowing look with her, and they both reached for pillows at the same time, smothering Harry and laughing as he struggled to escape them.

When they finally let him go, he was gasping for air and rubbing his eyes as they towered over him, arms around each other's shoulders. He looked up at them and grimaced.

"You two are some cold slices of bread, you know."

Ginny snorted back laughter as Hermione rolled her eyes.

"Well, there's hot toast on the table! Get up and make yourself into a hot sandwich, you big slab of meat!"

Ginny poured the spring water she had collected that morning over Severus' head after she had administered his nourishment in the form of potions and checked to make sure the Waste Transference spell she had placed on him was still in working order. She then walked over to help Harry secure his wreath.

Hermione was staring at Severus as she took off her robe and hung the garlands around her neck. There was already an intense energy in the room, and she hadn't even unleashed the sacred soil from its chest. She knew when success was just within her reach, and she could almost touch it, it was so heavy in the air.

"I'll be cleaning and preparing some more flowers for you guys. Let me know if you need anymore help, yeah?" Ginny smiled as she walked out the door, turning around to close it behind her. "Good luck!"

Harry turned to face Hermione, drum and rattle ready to go. She closed her eyes briefly, pulling in a cleansing breath of air.

"Can you feel it, Harry?"

He smiled softly and nodded. "We should start. Who knows how long it will last."

He walked over to his side of the room and knelt down, instruments touching the ground. Hermione stood at the foot of Severus' bed, arms above her head.

"Itshevuma."

The lid of the stone chest rose into the air as Hermione used her wandless, non-verbal magic to distribute the sacred earth along every inch of the bedroom. Harry began to rub his rattle and drum with the red soil, eyes closed.

"Itshewa."

The lid fell back down to close the chest, reverberating sound and magic off of every inch of everything in the room. Hermione's center began to throb. The magic was so sensual, the power was so radiant... She focused all possible energy on herself, opening her eyes.

"Isinxelelumba. Isidalumba."

Her hands suddenly glowed and surged with deep blue electricity. Slowly lowering herself onto her knees, eyes still closed, she brought her hands down to meet the cool, red earth that covered the wooden floor. As soon as her hands met the earth, a blue shock of light flashed over the room, and the magic caressing her hands became a deep forest green.

Hermione rose in an achingly slow fashion, running her glowing hands over her sweating body, creating long streaks of green magic across her exposed flesh. The lines expanded and met until she was standing with her arms above her head once again, and her entire body glowed and pulsed with that deep green.

This was the hardest part for Hermione. She had to hold her position, hold the magic in her, until Harry began the drumming. She could feel it caressing her completely, inside and out, and the incredible power that came along with it felt absolutely amazing.

A rattle shook to her right.

Hermione took a deep breath and arched her back.

"Emula ngaumphefumulo."

The dancing began as Harry set in motion a simple beat on his drum. She moved slowly, carefully towards Severus' still figure on the bed. She had no memories to project back into his mind, so she moved straight towards the revival of his senses.

"Ilumbodonsa umoya, Ilumbokhipha umoya. Ilumbodonsa umoya, Ilumbokhipha umoya."

She was controlling Severus' breathing, forcing him to breathe in and out on her commands. Long spirals of green energy were going into Severus through his nostrils, and Hermione's hips began to sway with a more purposeful pace as she came toward him.

She said a silent prayer for Harry, hoping he could cope with the intensity of the intricate beats.

"Ngedwazwa."

This was as far as they had ever gotten before. Severus' ears glowed green and remained so as Hermione and Harry continued with the ritual. She could feel her body begin to ache with desire. The ritual was laced with sexuality, and it was very hard to suppress the need it awoke inside her. She supposed that was why Harry practically ran straight into Ginny's vagina after a long day of attempting the ritual.

She was beside the pale man now, still gyrating, and she brushed one hand first across his lips and then along the bridge of his nose.

"Ngedwanambitha, lphunga ngedwa."

His lips and nose glowed that same green, and she became even more confident than she had been before. It was really working, just as they had planned! She just had a little farther to go...

She felt him out with her magica and focused on opening a connection between them, between their minds.

"Ngedwabona."

She opened her eyes, preparing herself for the sight she was about to witness. She knew that at this point in the ritual, his eyes should open and meet hers, but all of the tomes that she read stressed the point that he would be unfocused at best.

The magic scoured his heavy eyelids, and for a moment she was unsure if it was going to work. But when he opened his eyes, he was staring directly at her, rebounding her connection with him back onto her.

Harry was still diligently beating his drum and shaking his rattle, his back to her and Severus. Was he coherent? Did he see her? The books never spoke of this situation, she was totally unsure how to react.

Keep it up, girl... There was no mistaking the deep, resounding voice that rang in her mind.

And with that, Hermione fainted.

A/N: All of the spoken spells in bold are phrases that I entered into a Zulu translation website, listed below. I know that they are far from grammatically correct in the African language, but I liked the way they looked in the rough translation.

Also, I tried to give you all a bit of smut before his snarkiness woke up, I hope it was sufficient to tide you over :D.

SO what will happen now? Muahaha... I might make you all wait a few days to see! Chapter Five is half way through, but I'll give you a little hint. A weasel and a ferret come to see a snake...

Here are the translations:

Itshevuma- Stone rise like sun.

Itshewa- Fallen stone.

Isinxelelumba. Isidalumba- Right hand do magic, left hand do magic.

Emula ngaumphefumulo- Begin with breath.

Ilumbodonsa umoya, Ilumbokhipha umoya.- Breathe in magic, breathe out magic.

Ngedwazwa- Hear me alone.

Ngedwanambitha, lphunga ngedwa- Taste me alone, smell me alone.

Ngedwabona- See me alone.

