

# Illicit Desires of the Heart

*by Pearle*

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*Chapter 1 of 1*

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Summary: The war is over. Severus and Hermione have found true love, or so she thought. Lately, Severus has been disappearing without explanation. Where does he go and more importantly, who is he meeting?

Disclaimer: The characters, settings, etc., of the Harry Potter series are not mine; they belong to J.K. Rowling and Co. I promise to return them when I am through. Well, most of them anyway.

~~~ Illicit Desires of the Heart ~~~

"I don't know, Harry, he had such a guilty look on his face the last time I came home unexpected. I'm not sure what to think." Hermione sat wringing her hands.

Her best friend, Harry -The-Boy-Who-Saved-The-World-And-Lived-To-Tell-About-It-Potter was sitting across from her shaking his head. "Don't complain to me about Snape. You know I never liked him to begin with. How you could fancy him is beyond me!"

Hermione poured her friend a cup of tea and offered him a grilled tofu and humus sandwich on no-grain bread with a side of carrots. Harry gingerly took the plate from Hermione. Having lunch with her was not as enjoyable as it used to be. Sometime in their seventh year, Hermione had become a vegetarian with a vengeance. She was constantly lecturing them on the evils of animal fat and what it did to the digestive system. No grains, animal fats, or by-products. No cheeses, too much cholesterol. The list was endless.

Harry was surprised Snape wasn't snarkier if he had to eat like this all the time. It was amazing the man weighed anything at all.

"Harry, I...I think he might be seeing someone else," she said in a small voice.

If the food wasn't enough to make him choke, that thought would do it.

"I have to attend a seminar the end of this week. I'll only be gone two days. Please, Harry. We have been friends for a long time, would you see if you can find out anything for me?" she asked.

"Like what?"

"I don't know. Maybe you can follow him around."

"You want me to follow Snape?"

"I wouldn't ask you if I didn't think it was this serious. If I lose him, I don't know what I'll do." Hermione's lashes sparkled with unshed tears.

'To start with, you'd be much better off,' he thought. "All right. Fine. I'll follow the git around. You're lucky the team doesn't leave until Tuesday for our next game." Though he tried to hide it, his voice still held a note of disgust at the thought of the two together.

Harry had vanquished Voldemort at the end of their seventh year. The Dark Lord had shown up, uninvited, at the leaving feast. But the Order had been ready for him. Inside information had told them where and when he would make his final stand. It had been a simple matter of rallying their forces, the light triumphing over the dark.

Everything had been going so well, and then Hermione had to go and declare her feelings for the greasy git. And to make matters worse, the bloody bat had returned her sentiments...it was almost enough to make him sorry they had won the war! Harry loved Hermione. They had been through a lot in their seven-year friendship. But Snape! He was just glad the Cannons were on the road so much.

Harry had been at loose ends after the final battle. He had spent seven years dodging various attempts on his life. It was time for a little fun. Playing seeker for the Chudley Cannons had fulfilled that goal nicely and kept him from witnessing too much interaction between the unlikely couple.

Hermione, on the other hand, had stayed at Hogwarts. She was McGonagall's new Transfiguration apprentice. The offer had delighted the talented witch and resolved her own dilemma. She had no desire to leave the castle while 'the love of her life' remained in residence. The offer of an apprenticeship disposed of that problem quite nicely, and answered the question of what to do now that her Hogwarts years were over.

Hermione hugged him enthusiastically. "Thank you, Harry. I knew I could count on you. We're traveling by group Portkeys. I leave early Thursday morning and return early on Saturday. The seminar is over late Friday night, but I can't get a Portkey back until Saturday."

"Yeah. Whatever."

They both jumped as a loud thud echoed throughout the room. From the sound of it, the outer door of Severus's private study had been thrown open with enough force to slam solidly through the back wall.

"In all my years, I have never seen dunderheads of such magnitude. 'But, Professor, how was I to know the difference between chop and dice?' What idiot couldn't tell the difference?" Severus could be heard snarling to himself from the other room.

"I think I'd better go. Snape doesn't sound happy. I don't think he will be too thrilled to find me here." Before Harry could leave, Severus stalked into the room.

"Professor."

"Bad day, dear?"

Severus ignored their comments as he continued his trek to the bedroom, his robes a smoldering mess. He literally trailed tendrils of smoke in his wake. Large holes, cloth missing to the point of exposing his skin, were visible in between the globs of unidentifiable green goo clinging to the remaining material.

"You would think, that after three years at this school, after three years of listening to me lecture them about procedure and practice that the little bastards..." Severus's rant could be heard as he moved through the bedchamber and on into the bathroom.

"Uhm, maybe you better go, Harry. I'll see you Thursday, and thank you." Hermione sighed, glancing quickly in the direction of the bathroom before ushering her friend out the door. It was going to be a long night, from the looks of things.

She walked through the bedchamber deep in thought, banishing bits of goo as she walked. It might be nothing, but lately, Severus seemed to be...distant. Well, more distant than usual.

Harry and Ron had wondered how she could've fallen in love with the bane of their existence, pointing out his sharp tongue, large hooked nose, and nasty disposition. She certainly wasn't going to volunteer what that tongue or nose could do in the privacy of their bedchamber, or the potions classroom, or the middle of the Quidditch pitch, or the Great...

"Bullocks!"

Hermione knocked on the bathroom door. "Severus? Are you all right?"

Steam escaped as she pushed the bathroom door open. His robes were lying in a pile in the corner, wisps of smoke still rising from the sodden mess. The man, himself, was currently soaking in the oversized tub, his eyes closed, the scent of sandalwood gently clinging to the steam. The dimensions of the tub had been magically altered to allow his long limbs ample room in what would have normally been a confining space. And that was another thing Hermione was not going to share with her friends. Proportions in anatomy - long legs, long fingers, long...

"You will not believe the day I have had." His voice was as sullen as every, his eyes flashing with barely restrained anger.

"You want to tell me about it?" Hermione gestured to the mass of his ruined robes as she slowly shed her own clothing.

Severus's eyes darkened as he watched her disrobe. His voice, smooth and sensual, slid across her nerves as he held his hand out to her. "Maybe later. Care to help me forget?"

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Harry stood silently in a small alcove just outside the Potions classroom, his invisibility cloak hiding his presence. He had cast *aDo-Not-Notice spell* in addition to a *Disillusion charm*, hoping against hope it would be enough to hide him from the surly Potions master sight as he watched the small dot representing Snape move around on the Marauders Map. Hermione had owed him with her itinerary the night before. She would leave the castle after breakfast. Snape had a full load of classes, both today and tomorrow. It would have been impossible for him to go anywhere until after his last class.

The bell ending the final period of the day reverberated in the empty hallway. Harry could hear the sound of chairs scraping the floor and cauldrons being hastily dropped onto stands as the students hurried to gather their belongings and make a hasty get away when they were finally released from the dungeon classroom.

Snape's voice could be heard through the plain wood door. "Since you have proved your ignorance once again, I want two feet on the properties of basil as it relates to today's potion and why it should not be combined with snail root. Dismissed. Out of my sight before I change my mind and add an essay on the proper care and treatment of cauldrons to your meager load of homework."

Harry smiled as he heard a groan from the students, the door to the classroom burst open. The hall was quickly filled with the sounds of happy voices, freed from a day of academics with nothing more threatening ahead of them than an evening of dinner, studying, and free time.

He had a clear view through the open doorway of the interior of the classroom. Severus's face was set in its customary snarl as he cleared the room. He seemed preoccupied as he glided around the classroom, cleaning desktops, gathering forgotten books and other belongings, sending unused ingredients back to the supply cabinet

It was the two most boring hours of his life, watching Severus grade essays while making scathing comments about the contents of the compositions and his students. The dinner bell rang, freeing Harry from any further torture. He waited until Snape had warded the classroom and headed off down the corridor, before heading for the Great Hall himself.

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Severus's scowled into his plate when he realised the continual pain in his arse wasn't going to leave. In a matter of minutes, overflowing platters appeared on the table. The smell of roast beef and grilled chicken made Harry's mouth water. He was surprised to see a plate of greens and vegetables, some he couldn't identify, appear in front of Snape.

"Dobby sorry, Sir, but Dobby promised the best friend of Harry Potter that Dobby would not allow her chosen mate to eat any thing that was not on this list." Dobby produced a rolled up scroll from somewhere within the depths of his mismatched socks. A flick of the elf's wrist and the scroll unrolled, for several feet. "You can't have chicken legs, Sir. Chicken legs is not on the list."

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If Hermione was right about him disappearing, and Harry was beginning to think she was dead wrong, Snape would have to leave the grounds to carry out whatever nefarious deed he had planned since the rest of his day had proved to be so mundane. The sound of a door closing brought him to full attention. A shadow seemed to detach itself from the building. Harry watched as the dark shape moved toward him.

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Harry returned to his lookout post, still at a loss as to what he was going to tell Hermione.

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Hermione opened the door, smiling at her best friend. "Harry, come in."

"So, how was the seminar?"

Hermione's eyes clouded over. "It's true than, isn't it?" she asked in a whisper.

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"How else do you expect me to find out where Severus is going?"

"Hermione."

"Where does he say he goes?"

"And those are all lies?"

"Harry, you're a wizard, no one is going to hurt you." Hermione got up abruptly. "Show me where he Apparates to. I need to make a Portkey that will take me directly to you."

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Another hour passed with no sign of Snape. Harry was beginning to think tonight would be another no show. The sound of a crack told him just how wrong he was.

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"Hermione." Harry stopped just inside the pub's entrance and grabbed his friend's arm. He could just make out Severus, sitting in one of the booths near the back, talking

to the waitress again. He tightened his grip on her arm, hoping to reason with her. "Maybe you should wait until he comes home to talk to him."

The interior of the restaurant was dark and poorly lit, making it difficult to see. Though the words were intelligible from this distance, there was no mistaking the sound of Snape's voice as he spoke to the waitress. From the young woman's ready smile and sudden laugh, it was obvious she knew Severus.

"And give those two another chance to stab me in the back? Let go of me, Harry." Hermione pulled her arm from his grasp and charged forward. She covered the distance in seconds, before rounding on the man sitting quietly in the recesses of the booth. Her voice carried as she turned on the man she loved. "I don't believe it! Severus, how could you?"

"Hermione?" Severus jumped as if he'd been hit by the *Cruciatius Curse*. "Hermione, I can explain."

"I don't think you can. How could you do this to me? To us? I trusted you." Hermione stood with her hands on her hips, enraged at the sight that met her eyes. A deceived Hermione was an angry Hermione, and not someone to be trifled with.

Severus Snape had been unfaithful all right, but not with another woman. There, in front of him, sat a double cheeseburger, dripping with condiments, and a side order of what appeared to be cheese fries.

"Hermione, I love you. Please, just give me a chance to explain."

Harry shook his head, he sort of felt sorry for the git.

Almost.

~Finis~

Pearle, July 19th, 2005

A/n: This is based on a drabble, *Illicit Desires*, which is based on a conversation with a close friend of mine whose husband is a strict vegetarian. She was planning on ordering a sausage and pepperoni pizza (a major offense cheese, sausage, pepperoni) one night while her husband was out of town. I told her she sounded guilty talking about ordering the pizza, almost as if she was considering having an affair. She said an affair her husband might understand, but the pizza was another story!

Nakhash, is still under the weather (get well soon!), so Amethyst has graciously offered to beta this story for me. Thank you, Amethyst, your help is most appreciated. Any mistakes you find, however, are still mine.

Enjoy. Please review and let me know what you think. I love hearing from you! As always, thoughts, comments, reviews, whatever are always welcome.

Regards,

Pearle