

Letters to No One

by GinnyW

Years after the downfall of Voldemort, a married Hermione sees a man she believes to be Severus Snape. Intrigued, she begins to write him a series of letters.

I

Chapter 1 of 4

Years after the downfall of Voldemort, a married Hermione sees a man she believes to be Severus Snape. Intrigued, she begins to write him a series of letters.

Author's notes: This story was written for the 2007/2008 Winter Round of the SS/HG Exchange and was a gift for the lovely Hayseed. Many thanks to my beta, DeeMichelle, and to Shiv568 for Brit-picking. :)

Prompt: Hermione runs into Snape, who is living as a Muggle, having escaped near-death in a fashion of your choosing. What happens next? The impact this may or may not have on her marriage is up to you as well.

Disclaimer: I am not JKR, nor have I ever claimed to be.

24 years later ...

9 September 2022

Dear Mr Smith,

As you can see, I am respecting your request for anonymity, even if I refuse to respect your request for privacy.

I agonised over what I should say to you in this letter. Though I feel that it's safe to say that I likely won't be able to stick to my original plan. I never did in school after all. It was why my required fourteen inch essays became three scrolls of parchment at three feet each. Believe me when I say that you were not the only person to complain about that.

First off, I must tell you that you have nothing to fear...at least not from me. I have not spoken with either my husband or my friends about seeing you and I have no intention of doing so.

I had intended for that statement to be the end of my correspondence. Really, all that I needed to do was reassure you that no one would be dropping in for an unexpected visit. Though, you should know that even if I were to divulge your whereabouts to law enforcement, the Minister, or even my friends, you would not be in any danger.

You were...and still are...a hero. Even if you were to return to our world, you would be greeted with praise and accolades. Especially now.

The Biography of a Professor, Headmaster, Spy & Hero is a current bestseller. Harry found the best biographical writer he could and commissioned the story.

Perhaps you already know this. Bestsellers make the news in one form or another and even if you're living a Muggle existence, I would be very surprised if you didn't keep

your finger on the goings on in our world. But just in case, I wanted to make sure that you knew that you would no longer be ostracized ... that you would be welcomed if you were to return.

I don't know if it was serendipity or happenstance that caused me to run into you that day. I had been thinking of you. You couldn't have known that, of course. After your death, we were informed that you had no surviving family members and Harry took it upon himself to clean out your home. I was totally in awe of your book collection. Magnificent.

I'm sorry, but I did keep many of the rarer tomes. The others went to the school's library. Ever since then, I've had a passion for rare books. Yes, I'd always loved books, but it was after seeing your collection and appropriating a few of the choice books for myself that I felt a passionate pull towards the old and rare books. That's what it was that pulled me into that antique bookstore. You see, it is now my custom to visit every rare bookstore in every town that we visit.

Of course, neither my husband nor my children understand this obsession. They just accept it as part of me and when we're on holiday, they ensure that I have a day to myself to visit and scour the used bookstores. For whatever reason, this has made me feel this odd connection with you.

Strange isn't it? That I would somehow feel connected to you after all these years. So, as I often do, when I had entered that bookstore, I had been thinking about you. It had to be for that reason alone that I recognised you so quickly. It wasn't your appearance so much as the fact that I simply ... *knew*. You barely even look like yourself, though I'm not sure if it's an elaborate glamour or perhaps just how you should've looked all along had you not been living your entire life indebted to the likes of Albus Dumbledore.

Oh yes, I don't hold the same amount of love for that old man that my friends seem to hold. I viewed those memories, too; I saw how that man manipulated you, twisted you to do his bidding. And I can only imagine what the other encounters that you had with him were like.

I do have one question for you.

Why?

Why run? It truly wasn't necessary.

Why go to such, obviously, elaborate methods to cover up the fact that you actually survived such a gruesome and meaningless death? Because I know that it took time. You had to have planned it in advance. You had to know that someone would come back for your body. Because we did. Well, Harry did. He carried your body out of the Shrieking Shack himself. He laid it in a room where we had the other victims of the battle and it was buried in the Hogwarts' Cemetery.

Maybe the next question I should be asking is "how"... but I promised myself that I wouldn't bombard you with questions, so I'll leave it with that.

This time.

Obviously, I've sent this letter to you through regular post. If you ... I don't know ... wish to respond, then you can reply to the return address on the envelope. I keep a post office box for corresponding with my extended family.

(Of course, this is all providing that you even read this.)

The final thing that I wished to say, Mr Smith, is: Thank you.

Thank you for protecting us. We may have been clueless as to the things that you'd done for us at the time, but we do know the many sacrifices that you made for all of us. Not just for Harry, Ron and myself, but for our world as a whole. I hate to think what would've happened had you not been the man that you are.

The man that Harry's mum always knew that you could be.

Sincerely,

H Weasley

~ ~ ~ ~

23 May 2023

Dear Mr Smith,

I would ask you if you are surprised to hear from me again, but I've promised myself that I would limit myself to one question each time I wrote...well, at least one set of questions...and I have something else that I'd rather have answered.

Yes, I did just say 'each time'. I fully intend to write again. For what purpose, exactly, I'm not sure. It's not as if you replied to my last letter.

It's nearing the anniversary, you know.

Twenty-five years. It's supposed to be a joyful celebration. Freedom and all of that, but it's still so painful. For those of us who lived it, for those of us who survived.

And, inevitably, as the date looms closer, the nightmares return. For me, they are the kind of nightmares that awaken you in the cold darkness of night and leave you frightened and sobbing.

It was one of those dreams which has awoken me tonight and taken me from my bed. My husband doesn't notice, though after so many years I truly don't expect him to. Sometimes it's just easier to cope on my own than to sob into someone else's shoulder. And whether you agree with me or not, sending off a letter to someone...who I'm not even sure will read this...is coping on my own.

Now, back to my dream. It's a recurring nightmare for me. I've been having the same one for nearly twenty-five years. They began after that day and though after a few months they did begin to subside, when the anniversary approaches, they inevitably return.

I see the bodies. And worse than simply seeing those lifeless, still forms, I am forced to sit and watch as the last signs of life leave each and every one of them. You have always been one of the dead.

I don't believe I've ever felt so helpless and so guilty for sitting back and doing nothing as I did that day. And even now, I grow nauseated and dizzy when I see a pool of blood, even though I'd never been squeamish before that incident.

But, of course, you didn't really die that day, did you.

That's the reason that my dream changed a bit tonight. For, you see, when the dream-you was lying in Harry's arms, the last glimmer of light faded and Harry stood up. It was not more than two seconds after that when your eyes popped open and you turned to me saying with that sneer of yours, 'Ten points from Gryffindor, Miss Granger, for failing to act as a normal human being and help a dying man.'

I think that the worst part of it was that it's true. I didn't try to help and even now I don't know why. I had dittany in my bag. Not that it necessarily could've saved you, but the least I could've done was try.

And then I remind myself that you didn't die. You're alive and well in ... well, you were. I haven't a clue if you're still there or not.

All of this leads me to my next question, Mr Smith. Which is quite simply... how?

Seriously, how did you survive? Harry went back for your body; he helped dig the hole where your coffin was placed in the ground. So, how did you feign such a thing? I imagine that it was an elaborate plan. Or how else was it that we actually had a body to bury?

How did you stay hidden for so long?

Suddenly my mind is burgeoning with more questions, but I will refrain simply because I'd said that I would. There are just so many things I wish to know.

Before I break my promise to myself, I will close this letter. I just wish to finish this one by wishing you a happy anniversary. For, I'm hoping that you've been able to find some peace and possibly even some happiness in your life, and that day would've been the birth of your new life.

Sincerely,

H Weasley

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

30 June 2024

Dear Mr Smith,

I would imagine that you thought that you were well rid of me by now. It has been a long time since I last wrote. This year's anniversary passed by with much less pain than before. Just as always, it was remembered, but the dreams didn't come to haunt me this year. Perhaps the ghosts decided that twenty-five years was long enough. At least I hope that is the case.

I went to King's Cross this afternoon to retrieve my children. Not that it's easy to even think of them as children much anymore. My daughter will be starting her seventh year come September, and my son will be beginning his fifth. It was the final three years of my schooling when everything began to happen for me. So, recalling those memories can be almost painful. Especially having missed out on my seventh year. As you well know, even if it hadn't have been for my devotion to Harry, my bloodlines would've kept me from attending my seventh year when you had been headmaster.

I'm not blaming you. I truly don't want you to think that I am. You were placed in a position that wouldn't be fair to ask of anyone. And after speaking at great lengths with both Neville and Ginny, I can see how much you tried to protect them.

Detention with Hagrid, indeed.

You probably don't wish to continue with reminiscence from me, though, do you? I would imagine not. As I said before, the anniversary could possibly be like a birthday for you and remembering the time before that wouldn't be helpful in continuing on with your life. And besides, just because I didn't attend my seventh year when I was supposed to, it didn't prevent me from going back and taking my N.E.W.T.s.

I am rather nervous about my son who, as I stated earlier, will be starting his fifth year. He is not one of the great academics of our world and the only positive thing that I can say about school is that I'm glad I don't have to deal with punishing him on a day-to-day basis because he's neglected to turn in his homework. That boy would much rather be out playing Quidditch than writing an essay. He takes after Ron, I believe. He's a clever boy, but he has to work very hard for his marks and currently his only desire is to join the family business with his father and uncle. Nothing that I've said has been able to discourage him. At this point, it's probably better not to push, as I don't want him to join them simply to spite me.

You do recall Weasleys' Wizarding Wheezes, don't you?

I can almost hear that derisive snort. Perhaps you really are reading my letters; either that or I have a wonderful imagination.

My daughter, Rose, is a completely different story. She reminds me so much of myself when I was her age. She has such strong opinions and she is constantly working. Too much, actually. She reads constantly, studies when she doesn't even need to, and is always trying to learn something new. I just worry that she will put so much effort into school that she'll miss out on many other experiences. It took me an awful long time to realise that there was more to life than books.

Speaking of books, we will be travelling to Venice, Italy this summer and I was hoping that you could point me in the direction of some bookstores that I might enjoy visiting. On our holidays to Belgium last year, I was lucky enough to come across a rare set of Victor Hugo's *Les Misérables*. All second editions in good condition. He's always been one of my favourite authors and I was so pleased to have come across such a find. It's such a tragic story, and in many ways it reminds me of you. Perhaps I should start referring to you as Valjean. Though after writing that, it doesn't quite seem to fit ... maybe Quasimodo is more accurate.

A man who is locked away from the rest of the world and forced to serve an evil master.

Who was your evil master, Quasimodo? Was it truly the obvious or was it the kindly, old and terribly manipulative headmaster? Or even more tragically, was your master simply love?

Look at me, I'm now romanticising you even more than I was. I apologise for that. It was simply a brief lapse in judgment. Though to maintain whatever sense of dignity I still possess, I shall close this letter.

Sincerely,

H Weasley

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

15 August 2024

Mr Smith,

I hope that life is treating you well. We just returned from holiday and we had a fabulous time. Venice is absolutely beautiful. I adored the cathedrals, the canals, the museums... everything. It is definitely a city full of history. And on more than one occasion, I found myself wishing that the walls could speak.

Can't you just imagine the stories they would tell?

Have you ever been to Venice? I thought of you again while we were there, even though you never did write back and recommend any bookstores. I found some on my own. I always do, there's no reason why this time would be any different.

Though, I did make an incredible find. I happened to be in the hotel lobby, when I overheard two other guests discussing a rare bookshop that they'd been to earlier that week, so after making my excuses to my family...truly, all I had to do was mention the books and my son and husband were ready to be rid of me...I went in search of it.

It was a delightful little shop, hidden down a small side street on the Calle della Mandola. Honestly, I don't know how they stay in business because if I hadn't been looking for it specifically, I don't think that I ever would've found it. Apparently it is owned by an older gentleman who is helped out by his nephew.

I hadn't found anything worth mentioning until I went to the stack of books that the shop owner had just taken in as inventory. And there it was in the middle of the stack ... a first edition of *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*.

And the nephew was the one running the shop that morning and he hadn't even known what the book was worth. I'd tell you what I paid, but you wouldn't believe me. Yes, it was that inexpensive. And, no, I didn't do any magic wand-waving. (Well, except to verify authenticity, though at that price I would've bought it even if it was only one hundred years old instead of nearly two hundred.)

It could have been nothing less than serendipity.

Which brings me to my question.

It occurred to me the other day how elaborate that your plan must've been. You accomplished so much in a very short amount of time and it finally dawned on me that it was unlikely that you accomplished all of it yourself.

So... who?

Who helped you? Who knew about what you were planning on doing?

Maybe I'm wrong on this one. But as I keep trying to put the puzzle pieces together, I inevitably come up without a full picture and that seems to be one of the missing pieces.

For whatever reason, I am still clinging to the hope that you will reply to one of my letters and that maybe one day I'll know the answers to these questions that are never-ending in my mind.

Enjoy the rest of your summer.

With Regards,

H Weasley

~ ~ ~ ~

13 December 2024

I hope that the Christmas holiday finds you well and that you have a wonderful New Year, Quasimodo.

Hermione

II

Chapter 2 of 4

Years after the downfall of Voldemort, a married Hermione sees a man she believes to be Severus Snape. Intrigued, she begins to write him a series of letters.

Part II

19 March 2025

Dear Mr Smith,

I couldn't sleep tonight, so where do I turn? Here. To my parchment, my inkwell and my quill. I am, once again, turning to an anonymous person who I like to pretend is reading my letters.

Over the last few weeks, I have tried other methods. My dismal attempt at journal writing has equated to there being ten sheets of parchment addressed to nobody that have been engulfed by the flames of fire. And I found that the process did me no good.

So, here I return. To you.

I'm sure that you're not pleased to know that, but quite frankly, I don't care. I have kept your secret. I've only sent you a handful of letters to which I've never received a reply. In my own convoluted mind, that equates to the fact that you owe me. And by God, I need someone right now.

My house has never been this quiet. Before I married, before I had children, I used to revel in the silence. I loved it. I had grown up with that, you see. It had been very difficult for me to transition to a school where I was forced to room with other girls. The only time I ever found any solace was in my books.

For whatever reason, my mind won't let me concentrate on my books now. Believe me, I've tried.

My husband died.

Three weeks ago, there was an accident in the lab above the store he ran in Diagon Alley. He was taken to St. Mungo's immediately, but he never woke up. After four days in a coma, he finally passed away.

Services were Friday last, and this morning I took my children on the Knight Bus back to school. And when I returned home this evening, it was to a truly empty house. The scent on his pillow has faded and I have been tempted to spray it with his cologne to maintain the illusion that he's still here, alive, just on a short business trip or away visiting family. It's a foolish wish, but one that I find myself believing each morning ... in that time between dreams and being fully awake. Then, with the cold air of the morning comes the realisation that I am, in fact, alone.

And it hurts.

I need to know... Does the pain ever go away? Will I ever be able to wake up in the morning and know that my life is still ahead, waiting for me?

I know that you know how I feel. I saw your memories. I saw how it hurt you to lose the one woman that you loved. I saw your face after you learned of her death.

I know.

You moved past it, didn't you? Weren't you able to finally go forward? Because right now, I feel like I've lost my own life and I don't know if I'll ever be able to get it back.

Please ...

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

27 April 2025

Dear Mr Smith,

Over the last few weeks, I have learned that there is a huge difference between solitude and loneliness. Solitude is where I can spend time alone, but there is someone available when I need them.

And loneliness is simply excruciating.

My children were home for the Easter holiday, and I had to once again put them back on the train this morning to send them back to school. Does this mean that I'm going to turn to you every time I feel alone?

Nothing personal, but God I hope not.

It's nearly the end of April and now my children won't be returning home until the end of June. That means that I have to make it through the anniversary on my own.

Ginny wrote to me, inviting me to dinner with her and Harry to commemorate the day together quietly. At first, I wasn't going to go, but now I think that I may. It's a far better option than sitting here alone.

I've tried throwing myself into my work, but as of yet I haven't been able to. Going to the office is almost worse than being at home.

I am finding mundane things to worry about. Like how my children are going to do on their end-of-year exams or if it's time I tried a new soap for washing the laundry.

And as I'm writing this, I'm finally realising that none of this is getting me anywhere. It's been coming up on two months since my husband died and it's just getting.... Maybe I just need a change.

Hermione

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

16 July 2025

Dear Mr Smith,

Well, my children are home from school. We... I mean.../received Hugo's test scores yesterday and I just have to share with someone how upset I am with his marks. It was enough to make me wonder if the discipline at the school is anything like it was when I was a student there. I am grateful that Hugo scored 'acceptable' rather than 'dreadful' on most of his exams, but it pains me to be thankful for such mediocre marks. I have such a difficult time relating to him. He'd rather play Quidditch, Exploding Snap or Gobstones than read or study or learn to do something useful.

I don't know if he's rebelling simply because he's a teenager, or if he's rebelling in response to his father's death. I tried speaking with my mother-in-law...she always did have a knack with dealing with teenage boys...but she simply cooed about how much like Ron he was and gave him an extra serving of pudding.

Rose, at least, did extremely well on her N.E.W.T.s, but that doesn't make me any less irritated with her. She has the potential to do anything that she wants. Anything! So, what does she do? My only daughter has decided to take her father's place in the Weasleys' Wizarding Wheezes organisation. The very idea of her working in the same capacity as her father scares the shit out of me.

When I told her how I felt, she tried to argue with me. She expended litres of breath trying to convince me that she wouldn't explode any cauldrons or labs or shops. But how can I know that? I didn't spend the last eighteen years raising her simply so she could go out and die the same way as her father.

After several hours of discussion, I finally got her to agree to study for her Potioneer's license first. Granted, I'm hoping that by the time she completes the apprenticeship that she'll want to do something else entirely, but if she doesn't, at least she'll be safe. Or safer.

Now she simply needs to find someone to apprentice under. Any suggestions?

I know, I know, it's pointless for me to even ask. I don't know why I even bother; it's not like you'll ever answer me.

And on that note, I have some work that I need to catch up on.

Hermione

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

12 December 2025

Dear Mr Smith,

I hope that you have a pleasant Christmas holiday. I would imagine that your little shop does quite a bit of business this time of year, more so than any other.

I am eagerly awaiting both of my children returning home. This year we are going on holiday to Australia with my parents. It's a trip that my parents are very much looking forward to.

When the war was at its height, I modified my parents' memories and sent them to Australia. They lived there that year and when I went to restore their memories, they elected to stay for another few years. It was only when I finally married and had my own children that they chose to move back to England. I am glad that they did. I wanted my children to be exposed to the Muggle culture just as much as their wizarding heritage. I think that both were important in bringing them up to be well-rounded individuals.

Hugo will be arriving home on the 22nd and Rose was given time-off from her apprenticeship so that we can leave on our holiday. And, this is the first time since Ron's death that I've been truly excited about something. I am looking forward to the holiday, to the time with my family and, of course, to the warmer weather. Molly and Arthur aren't pleased that we won't be at the Burrow for Christmas, but after countless letters trying to explain it to them, I think that they finally understand.

Things have been quiet here. Quiet and lonely. I got a new cat to keep me company in the evenings. He's just a kitten, only two months old now, with a beautiful grey body with white on his feet; the white goes just a bit up his legs and makes him look like he's wearing socks, and a spot of white on his forehead. He was a gift from Minerva. I've named him Lamont.

Minerva brought Lamont by a fortnight ago. We had a wonderful visit when she stopped by. She nattered on about her projects, her garden and about the bit of tutoring she had been doing during the summer holidays. Ever since Filius passed on two years ago, I think that she's been a bit lonely, too.

Near the end of our visit, she started talking about you. She hated you, you know. Not always... not even now. But for a time she did. When you ran the school. I believe that it was the way that you allowed the Carrows to harass and torment the students. That was her biggest complaint. Although, when she was here, she simply sat in her chair, sipped tea, and told me that she believed with all of her heart that you only did what you thought was best for all of us.

After that, she went off on a rant about how Albus used and manipulated you. (And if you can't see that, then you're still far too close to the entire situation.) He used you by constantly opening your wounds and then pouring in a hefty dose of salt-laden guilt.

'Albus Fucking Dumbledore, Bastard Extraordinaire was certainly a man who knew what he was doing.'

Her words, not mine. But I must say that I wholeheartedly agree.

Maybe knowing that doesn't matter to you. I guess I just wanted you to know that it wasn't only me who felt this way.

Have a happy Christmas.

Hermione

~ ~ ~ ~

2 May 2026

Dear Mr Smith,

Somehow, the time ran away from me. I meant to write well before the approaching anniversary.

We had a wonderful time in Australia. I found a first edition of *Toilers of the Sea*, or more accurately, *Les Travailleurs de la mer* from the original printing in 1866 while we were there. It's in excellent condition and I think that the Fates were smiling on me when I found my way into that shop on the last day of our holiday. An incredible find, I was so thrilled.

I had never read the book before, so I ordered an English copy from the local bookshop to read. I speak a little French, but not enough to be able to read such a lengthy novel without either getting a headache or becoming confused. Nonetheless, the books gave me something to keep me busy for a time.

I never did tell you about my daughter's apprenticeship. She is apprenticing with Sherman Stillers. I was surprised that she was able to find someone. Rose didn't begin applying until late July and usually all of the good positions are snatched up well before then. Lucky for Rose, the student who was set to train under Master Stillers did not receive high enough marks on his N.E.W.T.s, so there was an opening. She is enjoying her work with him and is hoping to be done with her apprenticeship in two years. Thus far, however, she is still talking about nothing but working with her Uncle George.

I may just have to give up on that battle. We'll see.

The anniversary of my husband's death passed by uneventfully. I had a quiet dinner alone, opened a bottle of wine and drank to him. Nothing special. Though I received flowers from several members of the family. Honestly, it hurts too much to do nothing but mourn him. I can't go on that way.

When I saw my children at Easter, we discussed our next trip together and both Rose and Hugo expressed an interest in returning to Switzerland this summer. I am not sure why I'm even mentioning this to you. It has given me a wide variety of conflicting thoughts. On the one hand, I'd love to see you. To walk into the bookshop and see you shelving the tomes or ringing up a patron and not have you avoid me or sneak out of the shop.

On the other hand, I am afraid.

Not of you, no. Though, part of me thinks that's how you'd like me to feel about you.

No, afraid that I may go try to find your bookshop only to find that it is no longer there. To learn that you, in fact, closed up shop immediately after I found you and as a result, you've not received a single one of my letters. Perhaps I'd find that there is a new proprietor who has been reading my letters and now knows more about me than any passer-by should know.

I don't even know if we will actually take the trip and if I was being smart about this whole thing, I wouldn't even tell you about the intention in advance. This is giving you far too much notice to leave, even if you are still there.

Perhaps it's simply better if I convince my family to go somewhere else for our holiday.

And, no, I haven't forgotten, happy anniversary.

Hermione

~ ~ ~ ~

6 August 2026

Mr Smith,

I'm not even sure why I'm bothering with this, but at this point I believe that you are, at the very least, receiving my letters and very likely reading them.

So, if you are reading this, I just wanted the opportunity to tell you that you are a bastard.

I don't really know what has been going through your mind these past two years, but I know that I deserve more than to be blatantly ignored. And that is the only conclusion that I can come to.

While we were travelling through Geneva, I stopped by the bookstore. You knew that I would, so I'm certain that this comes as no surprise.

Of course, you weren't there.

I had expected that, really I had. What I hadn't expected was that it appears that you left about the time when you would've received my first letter. Even after I'd assured you that I wouldn't say anything. And if you were going to run... why wait until after receiving my letter? Why not leave the very moment that I saw you?

Even more infuriating was when the new proprietor told me that she had never seen one of my letters arrive at the shop. She also told me that the gentleman who had owned the shop before her had left no forwarding address.

Do you know what that tells me?

That you set a forwarding spell on your post. So much for you living as a Muggle.

I didn't expect this to upset me so much, but it does.

I believe the shining moment was when she told me that the previous owner had owned a simply stellar collection of early editions of books written by Victor Hugo and she was holding his copy of *True Crime* for someone matching my description.

Apparently it arrived in the shop only a couple of months ago. Naturally, the package held no return address.

You must have made Mrs Thomas a screaming deal because she didn't even think twice about keeping the book for herself.

So, was this just a one-time occurrence, or have those lucky finds I've had been because you've placed them there?

I don't want a friend who stays hidden and refuses to speak to me, thank you very much.

I won't be writing again. Quite frankly, I can't deal with it anymore. I have had too many emotional upheavals in my lifetime to play a game with someone who I genuinely tried to befriend. I may as well go back to the journal writing. For this has been no better. At least with a journal, I won't be sitting here hoping for a reply.

Sincerely,

H Weasley

A/N: The final part will be added on Friday, but please note that there are two different endings and they will be posted simultaneously.

III-A

Chapter 3 of 4

Years after the downfall of Voldemort, a married Hermione sees a man she believes to be Severus Snape. Intrigued, she begins to write him a series of letters.

Part III- Ending A

30 April 2028

Mrs Weasley,

I will be in London on Friday next and wondered if you would be able to meet me for lunch.

S

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

1 May 2028

S,

It's not a habit of mine to make lunch dates with people when I don't know who they are.

H Weasley

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

2 May 2028

Mrs Weasley,

I didn't think that it was necessary to divulge my identity. Perhaps I give you more credit than you deserve. After all, you said yourself that I am nothing more than a lonely hunchback.

S

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

3 May 2028

S,

And tell me exactly why I should even bother taking time out of my day to meet with you?

H Weasley

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

4 May 2028

H,

I wish to speak with you about an anniversary which is approaching.

S

~ ~ ~ ~

5 May 2028

S,

Friday at two o'clock. Meet me at Alfords of Farrington.

H

~ ~ ~ ~

18 May 2028

Dear Hugo,

I hope that you're enjoying your final few days of school. You have a lot to live up to when it comes to sitting for your N.E.W.T.s next month.

And don't you try telling me that you're going to work for Uncle George, you know that Mum wouldn't sit for me just going to work there, she certainly won't sit for you doing that either. She's been so overprotective since Dad died. I wouldn't mention your latest girlfriend to her either.

But that's not why I was writing you. I'm sure that by the time you receive my letter you'll have already seen the front page of the *Daily Prophet*. I just wanted to make sure that you were given an unbiased account of what happened. We wouldn't want you to be so upset that you aren't able to do well for your exams you know.

It is true, our mother walked into that room on the arm of a very un-dead Severus Snape. You remember the stories about him. The worst Headmaster that Hogwarts ever had, the most vile Potions professor to walk the halls, the bane of every Gryffindor student. They are the rumours that every first year student hears the moment they first board the Hogwarts' Express.

Huey, I've never known Mum to be an attention seeker, but she put herself right in the middle of everything last night. It was unbelievable! The entire hall was in complete pandemonium when they arrived. Uncle Harry immediately took charge and he had Aurors keep the crowd of people back while he and Aunt Ginny pulled Mum and Snape out of the hall and off to a side room.

The newspaper said that Mum and Snape have been having a thirty year long love affair. Even going so far as to question our paternity. Don't believe a word of it! Mum never would've cheated on Dad.

Not ever.

And there is no way that she has spent the last thirty years harbouring a criminal while pulling the wool over the entire Wizarding world population just so she could rise up in the ranks in her job with the hope of a bid for the next Minister of Magic.

Just remember what our parents always said, the *Daily Prophet* is full of wannabe fiction writers all clamouring for the next sensational headline.

I did get a chance to speak with her and apparently she knew what she was doing. Mum told me that she found Snape on one of our holidays, in one of those dusty old bookstores that she likes to visit. I don't think that she ever told Dad about it. Hell, after talking with her, I don't think that she ever told anyone. She said something about writing him letters, but she didn't ever get a reply from him until a couple of weeks ago when he was ready to make his reappearance to the wizarding world.

God, Huey, she acted as if she truly likes the man. Mum never left his side the entire night. The pair of them sat there as Uncle Harry asked a barrage of questions and then Kingsley, followed by Minister Bones.

Mum kept saying that Snape deserved to be treated as a hero because everything he did had been for the Order and for Uncle Harry. (Though, every time she tried to say that about Uncle Harry, Snape would glare at her.)

Have I mentioned yet how glad I am that we never had him for a teacher? In some cases, I don't think that the stories did him justice. I wonder if it's true that he's a bat, because he sure as hell looks like one and I swear that when he walks he has a charm that causes those robes of his to billow. I wonder what he did while he was living as a Muggle to avoid detection. Mum said that he first owned a used bookshop—hence how she came across him—and later, he was an antique book dealer, but the clothes he wore seemed so much a part of who he is. Maybe old bookstore proprietors are usually eccentric. I don't know; I really never fell in love with those old, dusty books like Mum did. I prefer my novels to be fresh, crisp, clean and new.

Anyway, after Mum and Snape were both questioned, Uncle Harry agreed with Mum and they decided to allow Snape to attend the celebration with them. I guess you can't argue with the head of the Auror Department and the head of Magical Law Enforcement, especially once they have the backing of the Minister of Magic.

It was pretty obvious from the way she was acting that Mum trusts Snape, though I'm still at a loss for why. When I asked her, she told me that Snape was the one who allowed them to survive the war and that he had barely survived. I asked her about the body that they retrieved from the Shrieking Shack; she said something about how he'd been prepared for the attack and once Uncle Harry, she and Dad left, Snape got up and made his way out of the Shack to where some fighting was going on. He apparently found a nearly dead body then force fed it a concentrated dose of Polyjuice, applied a few long-lasting Glamour Charms and put it in his place in the Shack.

Mum didn't say so, but I would bet that he waited in the Shack until he knew that someone was coming to retrieve his body and then dosed the body one final time. You remember the stories we heard about that day ... the fallen people from the battle were gathered and buried very quickly. Services and the like weren't held until well after the bodies were placed in the ground.

After she told me the stories—the entire time with that man sitting with her and saying nothing—I asked *him* why he had chosen now to return. He said the strangest thing to me, and I still don't know what it means. He said, "Because I only recently realised that my evil masters have been dead and buried for a very long time and I was no longer forced to live in seclusion. Because it is high time that Quasimodo has a happy ending and is lucky enough to court his Esmeralda."

I haven't a clue what that means, but Mum smiled and wrapped her hand around his arm and I could almost swear that she had tears welling up in her eyes. God, you don't think that he was comparing Mum to a gypsy, do you?

Well, brother, I believe that I should let you get back to your revision, but I wanted to put your mind at ease. You know, in case you were trying to use that as an excuse to not study for your exams.

Love,

Rosie

A/N: This is the first of two possible endings. Please click forward to the next chapter if you'd like to read that version as well.

I wrote alternate endings for this story as a tribute to Hayseed's wonderful story, "Getting the Hang of Thursdays".

III-B

Chapter 4 of 4

Years after the downfall of Voldemort, a married Hermione sees a man she believes to be Severus Snape. Intrigued, she begins to write him a series of letters.

Part III-Ending B

December 24, 2043

Dear Mrs. Weasley,

You have been named in the Last Will and Testament of Mr. Stephen R. Smith of South Bend, Indiana, United States.

Enclosed you will find a copy of the deceased's Last Will and Testament with the areas which are pertinent to you highlighted. You will also find that which has been bequeathed to you.

We are sorry for your loss. If you have any further questions, please contact us.

Sincerely,

A. Kemp

Attorney at Law

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

22 May 2042

Dear Mrs Weasley,

I think that to begin with, I should apologise. I fear that if I don't do that up front, then you won't read any further. Apologising isn't something that I do often, nor is it something that I do very well, but that alone should tell you that this is sincere. After all of this time, I realise that it would have perhaps been more prudent for me to have contacted you sooner, especially as now I have no intention of sending this to you until after my death, which will be soon enough. The magic that I had once cherished is now slowly killing me. It is my penance for not exercising my powers for so many years. This is the same disease that kills squibs at ages much younger than most witches or wizards. Even if I were to begin using my magic again, I have gone far too many years without its use and it would only serve to lengthen my life by a few months.

It is for not making contact with you sooner for which I apologise.

As I am sure a woman as clever as you would deduce, the box contains all of the letters you ever sent me. They were not food for the fire, but rather something that proved over time to provide me with another form of warmth.

When you first crossed paths with me at my bookshop all of those years ago, you took me by surprise. I had fully believed that I was in a place where I would not be found. There are not many wizards who frequent antique Muggle bookshops. For whatever reason, I believed you when you vowed not to speak of our encounter with another soul. That is, I believed that until I received your first letter.

Whereas you likely viewed it as reaching out to someone, I saw it as a threat. You not only knew who I was, but you also knew where I was. Your first letter was a very firm reminder of that. It was at that time when I decided to sell my shop and I began down the fifth career path of my lifetime.

As you now know, your letters continued to find me. The spell to forward your letters to my location was the only bit of magic that I have done since I left the wizarding world over forty years ago.

It was after your third missive when I realised that you were not out searching for me with the hopes of luring me back to England, to trial and to a rather cold and dingy cell in Azkaban. The process was a form of healing for you, as meagre as it was.

It wasn't until another four letters when I became aware how much your letters were healing me and my tattered, torn, dirty and wretched soul.

You once asked me who my most evil master was.

I feel that now I can finally answer that question for you. It was simply guilt. Guilt is a vile and corrosive parasite that eats away at your very being and once it attaches itself firmly to soul, it begins to control every aspect of your life. Albus Dumbledore knew that. He knew my sins well and he knew how to use that to his advantage. After all, if a man is never allowed to heal, he makes a willing servant. All in the vain hope that one day he may be given the blessing of no longer being in pain.

I had been certain that it was my destiny to die that day in the Shrieking Shack. However, Fate had other plans. I had not expected Potter to be there and it was my mission, my obligation, to find him before I died. I simply had to make it appear to my Lord that I was going to die so that he would leave me. The counter-spell had already been started before I realised that Potter was in the room.

At that point it was too late; I was doomed to continue living. I simply had to decide whether I wished to spend my remaining days in a changing world where the likes of me would not be welcome for years to come or for me to live my cursed life away from the magic which had damned me.

I used a concentrated dose of Polyjuice potion and a long-term Glamour charm on the body of one of the Death Eaters. I had to count on the fact that the survivors would wish to bury the dead quickly following the end of the battle. And you were wrong. No one helped me... no one knew.

All of it had been a gamble, to be sure, but one which paid off well for me. I spent years living in Switzerland, undetected by those who had known me. Though I was still tortured by Albus Dumbledore speaking in my ear about how I had failed him and how I had failed Lily.

Your first letter wasn't relegated as rubbish because it muffled that voice. It wasn't until your letter which informed me that your husband had died when the voice of Albus Dumbledore was silenced completely.

The tone of your letters changed at that time. And for the first time, I began to see similarities in our lives, similarities between you and Lily and, finally, I began to come to peace with my own life.

I felt an unfamiliar compulsion to reach out to you when you were mourning, but the timing was never right. At first it was too close to the death of your husband and then I became busy with work. Ensuring that you were able to acquire some of my most treasured tomes was the only way that I felt that I could communicate with you. It was all I could do without risking bringing attention to myself.

After you returned to the shop that I once owned, I knew that I had missed my chance to ever connect with you. You had at last received your confirmation that I was receiving and reading your letters, but that I had chosen to still remain in the shadows.

What you failed to realise is that after living my entire life in darkness it would have been too uncomfortable, and therefore undesirable, to suddenly be in the spotlight. And despite your reassurances, I did not wish to risk being locked away to spend my remaining days in prison. A letter from me would have been too easy for the Aurors to trace and written proof that I was alive would be enough to reopen my file and for the manhunt to begin. Isn't that right, Mrs Head-of-the-Wizengamot? Even if you and Mr Potter believed in my innocence and well meant intentions, you would have both been legally bound to follow the procedures and go through the judicial system. Which equates to there having been no certainties in the outcome.

Getting the books to you without bringing attention to myself was the only logical course of action for me to let you know that I was, in fact, still here.

After I sold my shop, I began a career as an antique book dealer and for several years I was never in the same place for more than a few days at a time. Ten years ago I came to South Bend, Indiana and I decided to stay. It seemed oddly fitting for reasons that you can surely deduce, and I have become comfortable here.

With the letters in the box, you will also find the final books of my Victor Hugo collection. They aren't as impressive as the other tomes that you have, but that is simply because they have been well-read. Just as writing those letters made you feel connected to me, reading these books has made me feel closer to you.

I came to know you through your letters. You became my shining light and my friend. You showed me that it was possible to have a life after Lily.

Too bad I only learned of that fact after it was a lifetime too late.

My dearest Hermione, thank you for the friendship, companionship and unconditional caring that you offered me. For what had seemed like a one-sided friendship to you equated to my whole world. You have, indeed, given me cause to commemorate each anniversary of the fall of the Dark Lord and I now view this time of year as a time of my own rebirth.

With affection,

Severus

~ ~ ~ ~

2 January 2044

Dear Hugo,

I just wanted to tell you that it's very cold in Indiana right now. Mum was very tight-lipped about whom she wanted to see when we took the Portkey here, but she started to tell me a few things last night.

Did she ever tell you that for a few years she used to write to Severus Snape? You know who I'm talking about...that professor from Hogwarts who everyone spoke about. The one who all of the Gryffindors hated and the Slytherins adored.... The one who died during the Battle of Hogwarts.... The one who was the reason that Uncle Harry fought with the Board of School Governors insisting that they place his portrait in the Headmaster's office.

Yes, that Severus Snape.

It seems that Mum found him, very much alive, during one of our family trips when we were both still in school and she began writing to him. She said that he never wrote her back, but eventually he placed a few rare books in second-hand bookshops of cities that he knew she was planning on visiting.

Mum said that she received a letter from a solicitor the day before Christmas informing her that he had died...which explains why she seemed so distant on Christmas. It hit her pretty hard, Hugh. I didn't realise that she even knew the man outside of school, but it's obvious from her reaction that she cared for him. At least in some manner.

It was painful to watch her this afternoon. She went to the cemetery and found his marker. Mum asked to be left alone, so I told her I was going for a walk. I watched her from a small cropping of trees as she sat on that cold, wet ground, opened one of those old books of hers and quietly read a passage aloud. I'm not even sure what she read, she was so quiet. When she was finished, she placed the book back in her bag and then she pulled her wand slightly out of the sleeve of her sweater and discreetly cleared a small area in front of the grave marker. After that, she pulled out a small stack of envelopes and placed them in the clearing and with another flick, she lit them on fire.

She never shed a tear, but she seemed terribly resigned as she sat there and watched the flames consume what I believe were the letters she had sent to Snape. At first, I was more worried about her than I was after Dad died, but now, when I look at her, she appears to be almost at peace. It's as if an incredible weight has been lifted off of her shoulders. Mum hasn't said much since the trip to the cemetery this afternoon, but I honestly think she's going to be all right.

I hope that you and Grace are doing well. Mum and I will be home soon. She said that she wants to go visit the university near here before we leave. And, of course, see if there are any used bookshops around here. I'm sure there are. Aren't there always?

I love you,

Rosie

A/N: This is the second of two endings that were written for this story. If you didn't read the other, you can go back a chapter to see the other as well. Each has its own appeal.

I once again would like to thank Hayseed for her inspiring prompt and even more for her inspiring works. And I'd like to again thank my beta-reader, DeeMichelle, as well as Shiv5468 for Brit-picking. And, of course, I can't forget my wonderful friends who cheerleaded and encouraged me to finish.