

Temptations and Passions

by lux_astraea

Hermione ends up living with Severus Snape at Grimmauld Place while he's awaiting trial, due to circumstances involving Draco Malfoy, an estate agent, and Harry and Ron knocking up their girlfriends. What happens when she's forced to share living space with the one person she can't help but like?

Chapter 1 – Disappointments and Relocations

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Disclaimer: I don't own any of these characters. If I did, my name would be J.K. Rowling.

A/N: Written for maaiker on the livejournal sshg exchange. My first one, too! Enjoy!

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Chapter 1 Disappointments and relocations

Tap.

Hermione turned over in her bed, pulling the covers up and over her head with a resigned sigh.

Tap. Tap.

"Ron, your turn," she mumbled sleepily from under the duvet.

Tap.... Tap. Tap.

"Ronald! Your turn! Post!" she said louder, lifting the covers from her face and blowing hair out of her eyes.

Taptaptaptap! Tap! Tap!

"I swear, Ron, if all this post is for you I'll make you eat it!" Hermione yelled her usual threat in the direction of Ron's room without even thinking about. Sleepily she headed towards the kitchen pulling her dressing gown on in the process.

Taptaptap!

"Alright, alright. Hold on, you bloody impatient bird." Unlocking the window latch she let the owl in, which left the letters in an untidy heap on the table before flying out of the

window in a huff. "It's not even seven," she moaned, catching sight of the clock on the wall.

Scooping up the large stack of post, she automatically divided it into four piles, hers, Ron's, Harry's, and *an mail* which went into the recycle bin after being checked for hexes and curses. She leant against the edge of the table and sifted through her meagre pile. *Bill, bill, letter from Ginny, letter from the Ministry... the usual then.* She tossed them carelessly on the table and then placed the boy's mail on top of the two piles that had accrued for them over the last week or so.

Still groggy from a slight overindulgence of wine the night before, she made her way to the fridge for some juice and wondered if her stomach was up to breakfast.

Contrary to popular belief Hermione wasn't a morning person. While it was true that during her Hogwarts years she had risen most days at the crack of dawn, it had ~~not~~ been out of a strange love of early mornings. Sharing a room more was to blame; her roommates had been a little, well... loud while sleeping. If it wasn't Lavender and her constant snoring, it was someone mumbling in their sleep. Or someone having a nightmare and waking everyone in a panic. Not to mention the number of times she'd woken in the middle of the night terrorized by her own dreams or had just been unable to fall sleep in the first place because of worrying. She imagined it was to be expected when you went to school during a time when the Magical world's future wasn't exactly bright and shiny.

Now that school was finished, the war was over, and she had a job she enjoyed, she liked a lie in on the weekend *When someone else bothers to get the damn post*, she thought wryly before snorting in realisation of the fact that she was the only one in the flat now, so it wasn't like she had any choice.

Putting a slice of bread in the toaster, after deciding it was all she could cope with for now, she wandered around the kitchen checking cupboards and shelves for anything left behind by Harry or Ron. *Merlin knows they'll have forgotten something given that they both somehow managed to pack in half a day. I told them not to leave it until the last minute.*

The last week had been nothing more than a blur. Her best friends had told her weeks ago that they would be moving out of their shared flat to live with their respective girlfriends... sorry, *fiancées*, now that both women were pregnant. Harry had moved out shortly after, and Ron had left the other night, having had a hard time finding a place to live.

Honestly! Did they plan on getting them pregnant at the same time!? Hermione shook her head and buttered her toast. *Oh, well, as long as they're happy, who am I to judge?*

Scraping a little Marmite on her toast, she wandered slowly into the living area of the flat, picking up the odd thing here and there and putting them into the boxes she had started filling. She couldn't afford to stay here by herself, so she was in the middle of signing papers for a new flat of her own. It was closer to where she reported for work (though she normally worked from home), and not having to clean up after the boys was going to be a bonus.

Sitting down to read the *Prophet*, Hermione noticed a note that lay on the hearth. Slightly crispy on the edges, it looked like it'd been sent through the Floo.

Hermione,

Just thought I'd remind you about the meal we're having tonight. I didn't Floo call you as I know you like a lie in on your days off. Ron's going to be late something about furniture for his flat, but I'll be there at eight.

See you later,

Harry. x

She put the note down on the table and went back into the kitchen to make tea, using the last of the milk in the process. She'd forgotten about the 'goodbye' meal that they had organised. Still with no plans other than meeting the Wizarding world's equivalent to an estate agent later in the afternoon, she had a pretty empty day all to herself.

Glancing guiltily at the paperwork for her latest project, Hermione shook her head and refused to let feelings of guilt push her into working today. She had a hangover anyway and thanks to Harry and Ron no potion to get rid of it. *A bath and then some reading it is then*, she decided. *It is my day off anyway.*

Chewing the last of her toast, Hermione grabbed her tea from the counter and went off to her bathroom musing over which bath foam and scents to use.

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She nodded off sometime around eleven snuggled up in an overstuffed chair her mother had given her, the book still in her lap. She had been dreaming of gigantic boxes and wardrobes chasing her, demanding to be filled with clothes and shoes, when a banging noise brought her back to wakefulness.

Whoever it was at the door was certainly enthusiastic, the knocking was non-stop and getting louder.

"It's me, the landlord. Open up!" bellowed a voice from the hallway.

Jumping out of her seat, Hermione rushed to the door to let in Mr Roper the landlord. He was always a grumpy man, and knowing that he'd been waiting meant he'd no doubt be unbearable to talk to. Ron had once likened him to a Dementor in his ability to somehow sap the happiness out of a person at ten paces.

"Mr Roper! Come in, come in," she said as enthusiastically as she could, waving him into the flat. "Um, here, take a seat. What can I help you with?" she asked while shifting a stack of ironing from the sofa.

"I've come 'bout the flat," he said simply, his gaze obviously south of her face.

"The... flat?" Hermione repeated, somewhat confused. She was, unfortunately, used to Mr Roper's wandering gaze, and although it annoyed the hell out of her, she'd never yet worked up the courage to voice her opinion on the matter. She was thankful that it soon wouldn't be an issue.

"Yes. I've found a new tenant, so I thought I'd let you know. Make sure you aren't planning on hanging around after this weekend."

"Oh, well, I'll be leaving on the day after tomorrow," Hermione said. "I sort out the final paperwork for my new flat today."

"Saturday? Good, good," he said gruffly, crossing his arms and looking at the living room which was littered with boxes, packing materials, and a mound of books from her morning of reading. "You'll be leaving it *clean*, yes?"

"Well... of course," Hermione said tersely, insulted that he doubted her ability with cleaning charms. Just because the place looked like a herd of wild Aethonon had had a whale of a time in it today didn't mean....

Mr Roper stood, and climbing over the stack of books she'd taken from the shelf, he walked over to the window, opening it wide.

"Leave this window open for a while," he said, crossing the room towards the door, his nose wrinkled up. "It smells funny in here, and I don't want the new tenant changing his mind."

"Right." She sighed, looking over towards the packing and purposely ignoring his comment. "Well, Mr Roper, I have a meeting shortly, so I'll need to start getting ready." She gestured toward the door.

"Humph, well, I'll leave you to it then," he said, running a hand through his thinning grey hair.

She nodded, faking a smile. "Goodbye, Mr Roper," she said. "It was nice speaking to you."

He grunted out a reply, and Hermione shut the door, sighing in annoyance. "That man!" *I'm so glad he'll no longer be my landlord after this weekend.*

Gathering her thoughts she headed off to her bedroom to change into something appropriate for the meeting with the 'Estate Agent.'

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"But I don't understand! How could... I mean, we had an appointment to finalise the sale today!" Hermione exclaimed to the white-haired man sitting on the other side of the desk.

"Miss Granger, I truly am sorry, but these things do sometimes happen. If you'd signed these papers earlier, it wouldn't have been an issue, but the seller pulled out just a few moments ago."

Hermione sat back in her chair and put her hands over her face. The seller had dropped out, and there wasn't a damn thing she could do about it.

"I don't suppose you have a time-turner handy do you?" She asked from behind her hands.

The man laughed nervously and shuffled the papers on his desk. "Alas, no. I'm sorry I realise this leaves you in an awful predicament. If there was anything I could do..."

Hermione laughed cynically. "Oh, bugger, where am I going to go now?" The aged man opposite her didn't reply, and the silence stretched out between them uncomfortably.

Suddenly realising she was most likely in the way of the man's other clients, Hermione sat up and collected her bag and papers. "Sorry, sorry, I know you must be busy. I'll get out of your hair."

He smiled and nodded as she stood, standing to escort her out of the room. "Miss Granger, I hope you find something," he said, watching her.

"Erm, thank you for everything, Mr Monk," Hermione replied, realising he was awaiting some sort of response.

"You take care." He smiled as she left the outer office, and she managed a smile back. Disappointed as she was it wasn't *this* fault the seller had backed out. If only she'd arrived an hour earlier!

Glancing at her watch she realised that she had time to go do some quick shopping before she would need to get back to the flat and try to pack some more things before the meal with the boys. *What a day!* She Apparated from her place outside Mr Monk's office and headed for Diagon Alley, her thoughts determinedly not on her impending homelessness.

She shopped quickly in order to distract herself from dwelling on her predicament. She collected the books she had on order from Flourish and Blotts, casting shrinking and weight reducing charms before stowing them in her robes. She stopped in at Obscurus Books and asked if her order had arrived yet, which it hadn't, but the shopkeeper assured her it would be there in a few days. She even ventured out into Muggle London to buy some other bits and pieces.

When she'd finally run out of things to do, she resigned herself to going back to the flat and getting ready for the meal with Harry and Ron. The idea of packing was just too depressing at the moment.

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Apparating directly into the hallway outside, she let herself in, dumping her haul inside the doorway to sort later. Checking the time again, she realised she'd need to hurry, she'd spent longer than she thought in Muggle London and only had an hour or so before she needed to meet Harry.

As was normal for Hermione, once her mind was free of distractions it turned to pressing matters... in this case, her soon to be lack of a home. *How on earth do these things happen to me?* she asked herself while taking off her cloak and shoes.

Opening her wardrobe she sat down on the edge of the bed in thought. She really didn't have any place to go. She couldn't ask to stay with Harry or Ron to stay now that they were all 'lovey-dovey' with their fiancées, and she couldn't exactly ask her parents with the way things had been between them lately.

Sighing, she stood and removed a pair of black trousers from the wardrobe and flicked through the various tops she had. *I could always ask... no, that's stupid. Or how about Grimmauld Place... even if he is there....* Finally deciding on a simple patterned jumper, she laid it, and the trousers, on her bed and went for a shower to clean her hair... and hopefully, her head.

Massaging conditioner into her hair, Hermione couldn't help but dwell on her dilemma. The only short-term solution she could think of was Grimmauld Place. Harry had always said she could use it if she needed to at any time. The only reason she hadn't Floo'd Harry already was because of its current occupant.

One Severus Snape.

It wasn't that she hated him or couldn't stand to be around him... far from it to be honest with herself. She had a strange obsession with him that had started when she was a student at Hogwarts. The events surrounding his 'resurrection' only made it worse.

Shaking her head she chided herself. If it was her only option at the moment, she should take it, right? Just because she had unresolved feelings of... lust? for him didn't mean she should make herself suffer out of an irrational fear making a fool of herself when she was around him. *Right?*

Rinsing her hair she hurried the rest of her cleaning routine, aware that her mind had wandered and she was no doubt going to be late.

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"Harry!" Hermione gasped as she ran to catch him up as he wandered back and forth outside the restaurant, scuffing his shoes on the pavement like he was still eleven years old.

"Hermione, there you are! Thought you were lost or something," Harry joked, hugging her.

"Sorry... I got... distracted... sorry," Hermione panted, still out of breath. Harry laughed and took her arm directing her to the open door of the restaurant.

"Hermione, I'm not annoyed. Come on, let's get our table. Ron said he'd be here no later than half past, and you know how he is about food, especially pub food."

Hermione smiled, and they were soon seated in a quiet corner of the pub-come-restaurant that Hermione was fond of.

"How was the signing?" Harry asked once they had their drinks and were settled in to wait for Ron.

Hermione groaned and shook her head. "It fell through at the last minute. I still can't believe it."

"What! How?" he said, shocked. "I mean all you had to do was sign the final... I mean... but what...," he trailed off as she just sat there looking lost.

She twirled the straw in her drink with one hand, the other supporting her chin as she leant against the table. "Harry, I really don't know. I mean the lease on the flat runs out this weekend, and Mr Roper was there today checking up on it... I don't know what to do. The only thing that seems to be going right lately is my research, and that's most likely because I've finished it."

Harry smiled. "Well, you *are* Hermione Granger. If your work wasn't going well, it'd be a sign of an impending apocalypse."

"What's this about apocolipps?" Ron asked as he reached the table and took a seat next to Hermione who was shaking her head at his mispronunciation.

"Hermione's flat purchase fell through, Ron," Harry answered, waving the waiter over to get Ron's drink order.

"Really? That's crap," he said, putting a comforting hand on Hermione's shoulder. "Have you decided what you're going to do?"

Hermione shook her head and looked at Ron. "Nope. I did have a couple of ideas but nothing yet to be honest. *Liar*, her mind echoed as she spoke, *there is one place*.

"Well, I heard Lavender Brown's looking for a house mate," Ron suggested all too seriously.

"Mate, I don't think Hermione's really that good a friend with Lavender. Isn't that right, Hermione?" Harry said, glancing between the two of them, all too aware of Hermione's opinion of Lavender Brown.

Taking a deep breath Hermione nodded. "That's right, Harry. We're not what you'd call suitable house mates."

"But you shared a dorm in school," Ron said, obviously missing the obvious.

"Not out of choice, Ronald," Hermione replied tartly.

"Oh... right." Taking the hint he wisely dropped the subject and turned to Harry, raising an eyebrow and mouthing *your turn* to him.

"Well, like I said before, Hermione, Grimmauld Place is there if you need it. Although Snape is living there while his trial is being sorted..." Harry ventured carefully.

Hermione took a long sip off her drink and rubbed her eyes. "I think that's the only option I have right now, Harry. Are you sure it's okay?"

"Course it is! It's my house, and Snape's there because he has nowhere else to go since the Ministry froze his assets before the trial." He paused as their meals arrived and then continued, "If he gives you any bother just tell me, okay?"

"Are you sure there's nowhere else?" Ron asked, looking at his food adoringly. "I mean... Snape..."

"Ron, he's got nowhere else to go," Hermione said, "and neither do I."

"You could stay with me and Mel," he suggested weakly.

Hermione shook her head. "Ron, as much as you and I get along I'm not sleeping on your couch."

"But Mel won't mind," Ron protested.

"I will! Honestly, Ron, thanks for offering, but you and Harry are settled now and don't have room for me to stay with either of you. Plus I don't know how long it's going to take me to get a place of my own. I can hardly sleep on your sofa until then, can I?"

Harry nodded in agreement and Ron finally relented. "All right, but if you ask me you'll go bonkers inside of a week living with Snape on your own."

Harry laughed and picked up his knife and fork, tucking into his steak with gusto, prompting the others to start eating too. "Crazy is one word for it."

"We'll come see you, Hermione," Ron said, his mouth full of mashed potato. "Stop you from going *barmy* with only Snape to talk to."

Hermione rolled her eyes and cut off a piece of her lamb chop. "Fine, Ron. But somehow I think I'll be okay."

She said that, but a part of her mind couldn't help but claim otherwise. *Be 'okay' as in you'll behave like an idiot and he'll guess how you feel?*

They quickly settled into their usual eating and conversation pattern from their years of Hogwarts dining. Soon enough Harry and Hermione sat slowly nibbling pudding with Ron still eating like he'd not been fed in a month.

"So, I'll tell Snape you're coming, if you want me to, Hermione," Harry suggested once he'd finished his last spoonful of apple pie. "So he knows and isn't a complete twat when you get there."

Ron snorted his drink at Harry's comment, and Hermione laughed. "Somehow, Harry, I think he'll be his usual self regardless of whether you go to tell him or not. Don't bother. I'll just tell him when I get there."

Harry nodded, and they took their time with the last of their drinks before paying the bill and leaving the restaurant.

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