

Jelly Babies and Agreements

by Mint Stick

Severus comes bearing gifts.

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Chapter 1 of 1

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A/N: Written to Ayerf's prompt 'Hermione, Severus, the magical equivalent to jelly babies'.

Severus Snape looked happy. Unusually so. Of course, simply looking happy as such was unusual enough for Severus, but Hermione had seen him in a few – situations – recently where he had actually appeared quite happy, in addition to looking rather pleased with himself.

Actually, now that Hermione eyed him a bit more carefully, he did have a bit of that smug look to him, too. Just the way he tended to look when—

Hermione banished those thoughts quickly. It would not do for the youngest Head that the Department of Magical Law Enforcement had ever had to be seen blushing.

Instead, she smiled politely. 'Good afternoon, Mr Snape. Do come in, please. Would you care for something to drink? Tea, perhaps?'

He nodded briefly, looking more like his usual intimidating self again. 'Tea will do.'

The secretary, a woman three years younger than Hermione, gulped and hurried back to the reception area, leaving her alone with her guest.

'What's this about then?' she asked as soon as the door had closed. 'You don't usually visit me at work. And I doubt it's business that has brought you here.'

'Don't be so sure about that. It could well be considered business!'

There! That smug look was back again. Hermione was starting to wonder if she should be worried. He hadn't gone and found someone else, had he? She ~~new~~ ^{knew} she shouldn't have said those things when they last met ... about missing those Muggle sweets. And about not being able to imagine spending a lifetime with a man who could not provide her with them. After all, she *could* always go and buy them at a random store in Muggle London, even if it wasn't really considered good form for a high Ministry official to spend time in the Muggle world.

Besides, she had meant Ron and his complete inability to deal with anything Muggle. (Apart from clothes. For some reason, Ron had taken well to Muggle clothes. What a pity, Hermione mused, as Muggle clothes had to be cleaned the Muggle way, and Ron had seen fit to leave that particular duty to her. She shuddered.)

'Here. These are for you.'

He had a small paper bag in his hand and was holding it out for her, black eyes beaming with hope as well as a certain amount of impatience. Hermione realised she had

let her mind wander and had not even noticed the gesture.

She took the bag and opened it with some trepidation. One never knew what Severus considered a suitable gift. Just two weeks ago he had presented her with another small paper bag, which Hermione had dropped as soon as she'd managed to open it, as it had been full of some *very* creepy, crawly things. Potions ingredients, completely fresh, as Severus had explained eagerly (once he had picked all the creepy crawly things off the floor and sealed them in a jar).

'Jelly babies!'

She dropped the bag (gently) on her desk and threw herself at him, planting a very enthusiastic kiss on his teeth, as he had just started saying something.

'Mmhn-muh,' was the muffled response.

Hermione released him and grabbed the bag. 'Oh, and so many yellow ones too! I like the yellow ones the best.' Picking one out, she bit into the soft, springy flesh of the sweet—

Flesh?

The tiny sweet was making quite pitiful sobbing noises.

'Severus?' she asked in a very small voice. 'Just, um, where did you get these?'

'The new sweet shop in Diagon Alley,' he admitted, looking a little uncomfortable. 'But I asked them specifically if they had Muggle sweets as well, and I was told that these *were* Muggle! There is no magical version of jelly babies, as far as I know. Or at least there wasn't.'

Hermione sighed, looking at the small yellow blob, which was still sobbing quite annoyingly. She really should have bitten the head off first.

At least Severus had tried.

She suddenly remembered something he'd mentioned earlier.

'You said something about how this visit could well be considered business? I hope you don't mean that you planned to, erm, exchange these,' she gestured at the bag, 'for any ... favours?'

'Um.' He shuffled his feet. 'I was actually, well, hoping to come to a more long-term agreement.'

Hermione tilted her head and eyed the man standing before her. He really was quite cute like this, she decided.

Worth keeping around for a long while, even.