

The Time-Turner

by shellsnapeluver

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Chapter 1

Chapter 1 of 9

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They say that time changes things, but you actually have to change them yourself.

Andy Warhol.

Why had she done this? She had been warned, but did it anyway. She knew the effects of her meddling, but couldn't resist the urge.

You are such an idiot, Granger!

She struggled with the hourglass, trying to make it go forward, but it was stuck. With a rush of anger, Hermione tucked the gold chain under her white button up shirt and vest ensemble and started pacing while yelling at herself.

"You really didn't think this through, did you? Nope, your curious mind got the best of you! You KNOW better than to accept gifts from strangers and then use them! You're supposed to be smarter than this!"

She stopped in front of the mirror above the fireplace and looked at herself. "What have you done? I'll tell you what you did, you stupid girl, you specifically used a Time-Turner to go back in time to try to warn people about their future!"

She was speaking to herself like she was two separate people; the reasonable one vs. the curious idiot.

"You didn't know how dangerous this was? The Time-Turner was a gift from an anonymous person, and you used it!

"Well, I did test it for enchantments, and it seemed perfectly safe.

"You should have turned it in! You're as bad as the boys! And now it doesn't work, so how the hell are you going to get back to the future? ERROR!"

She turned on her heel and started pacing again. "Okay, think, Hermione. You know you went back to the late 70s... How am I going to explain myself here? I need something... something that shows me as a transfer student from Durmstrang or Beauxbatons, but what? I need a good plan; yes, that's what I need, a good plan for hiding my identity."

She heard a *thunk* and quickly spun around to see some papers landing on a table. "What in the... of course!" She slapped her own forehead for not thinking of where she was earlier: the Room of Requirement.

She gathered the papers and started skimming through them. There was a letter from Beauxbatons explaining that she would be joining Hogwarts because her parents had moved. There were transcripts, a birth certificate and smaller envelope with some money in it. She had everything she needed to conceal her identity and make a new life for herself. "YES!"

She took a closer look at the letter; apparently, her new name was Mione Jean. "Ah, clever. Use my nickname and my middle name; I guess that will help so I don't forget a name that is foreign to me. I love this room."

After going through her paperwork again, she was ready to face her new world; then she looked down at her clothes. "This will not work." She couldn't go strolling through the castle wearing her Gryffindor robes, so she thought very hard, and the room produced a respectable outfit for the 70s. After hiding her old clothes, she checked herself in the mirror over the fireplace one last time, then walked out of the door.

Nothing seemed different on the outside of the room, yet she was very careful as she walked down to Dumbledore's office. There was nobody on the stairs, giving the castle an eerie feeling. She looked out of one of the large windows and noticed that the sun was still rising. *Must be very early in the morning.*

She reached the stone gargoyle and realized that she didn't know the password. After trying several different names of candies, she gave up and just stared at it, frustrated. "Fine, since you won't open up, I'll just wait right here until he comes down!" Before she could plop herself on the floor in front of the statue, it sprang to life. When nobody came down the spiral staircase, she decided to go up. The office door was opened when she reached the top, and she saw a much younger version of her Headmaster sitting behind his desk.

"Please come in; I wasn't aware that I was going to have a visitor."

"Sorry, Headmaster, but I'm new here. I'm a transfer student from Beauxbatons."

"Really? I wasn't given any notice."

"Well, it was very sudden; I just found out last night, and I was dropped off here early this morning."

"Hmm. Well, if you weren't meant to be here, the wards against the castle surely would have blocked your access. Can I assume you have all your appropriate paperwork?"

"Yes, sir." She pulled out her papers and handed them to him. "I'm sure you will find everything in order."

"Impressive. Thank you... err... Mee-ohh-ne-"

"It's pronounced MY-KNEE."

"Ah. Well, thank you, Mione Jean. I will inform my Deputy Headmistress, and she will have you sorted and placed into your appropriate house. By the look of your transcripts, I imagine you will excel here at Hogwarts. If you should have any problems adjusting, please let your head of house know."

Hermione rose to her feet, thankful that this was going well. "Thank you."

"Here is a map of the school. You will find Professor McGonagall here." He put an 'x' in a classroom. "Good luck, Miss Jean."

She smiled at him and left the room quickly, hoping he wasn't going to change his mind. By now, several students were out of their dorms and headed for the Great Hall. Hermione's stomach rumbled, and she quickly thought about ducking into breakfast, but seeing McGonagall was more important. She felt a little strange being the only person in street clothes; everyone else was in their school robes. *Well, it's certainly not the weekend.*

McGonagall was waiting outside her classroom when Hermione turned the corner.

"Miss Jean, I presume."

"Yes, ma'am."

"Please come inside. The Headmaster has told me everything. So, your family just had to up and leave, did they?"

"Yes, my grandparents live here and fell ill. My family wanted to be here," she lied.

"Ah. Well, this is the Sorting Hat; it will place you into a house. It's where you will live, sleep, and make friends; your house is like your family at Hogwarts."

"I understand. I know quite a bit about Hogwarts; I have friends who came here."*Well, that isn't a complete lie!*

"Oh, very well, then."

The hat sat on her head, and immediately it shouted, "Gryffindor!"*It had better put me there! After what I have done, yes, I should say that going back almost twenty years is a VERY brave thing to do!*

McGonagall removed the hat and sat it on her desk. "Wonderful! I'm your head of house, so if there is anything you need, please let me know. Do you have your trunk?"

"Um, yes. I transfigured it to fit in my pocket."

"Oh, my! You enjoy Transfiguration? I teach that!"

"Well, I have... had... an excellent teacher." McGonagall smiled down at Hermione and then showed her up to the dorms.

"Seventh years are at the very top of the tower. Lily Evans is the Head Girl; she will help you get adjusted." Hermione's heart dropped. She wasn't ready to see Lily yet, or anyone else. But just then, a tall, auburn-haired girl came around the corner. Hermione's heart sank with pain as she looked into her best friend's eyes. Her mind drifted back to Harry and Ron; she knew she was stuck here and wouldn't be seeing them for a while... perhaps ever again.

"Hi. I'm Lily."

Hermione swallowed hard. "I'm Mione."

"Please help her out, Lily; she's a transfer," McGonagall explained.

"Sure," Lily said.

McGonagall winked at Hermione and left the room.

Lily looked at Hermione. "You okay?"

"Hmm? Ah, yes, just overwhelmed."

"That's understandable, coming to a new school in your last year, but I can assure you, you are in good hands."

"Thank you. But I could stand to lie down for a bit. It's been a long trip."

"Oh, sure, I will go get your schedule from McGonagall and come back up here by lunch time with some food."

"That would be wonderful," Hermione said.

When Lily left the room, Hermione pulled a small trunk from her pocket and transfigured it back into normal size; she had asked the Room of Requirement to give her some luggage. She pulled out some school robes--the Gryffindor Crest had magically appeared on the right hand side. *That was quick.* She shoved off her shoes and jumped on the freshly made bed to lie down.

Okay, you did it. You are officially a new student at Hogwarts in 1970-something. I had better find out what year it is--oh, and the date and time, too. Seeing Lily wasn't too bad, but I already miss Ron and Harry. This is going to be so much harder than I thought! Suck it up, Hermione; you know you have to live with your choice.

Before long, she was being shaken awake. "Harry, stop... I'm up!"

"Harry? Who's Harry?" said a gentle voice.

Hermione shot up in the bed, wide-eyed.

"He's umm... someone... who had green eyes like you, sorry. All I saw were your eyes, and I guess it reminded me of him," Hermione said quickly.

"Ah... your boyfriend?" Lily teased.

"No. More like a brother type--he's my best friend. Oh, that looks delicious; I'm starving!" Hermione said, changing the subject away from Harry.

Lily handed Hermione the tray of food, and she started gobbling it down.

"Haven't eaten lately?" Lily asked.

"Mmm... nope," she said with her mouth full.

Lily giggled at her. "Here's your schedule. After reviewing your transcripts, they put you into all advanced classes. You have some breaks throughout the day, but if you want to add more classes, you can."

"Nah. I have been overloading since I started school. I think I will take it easy right now. Thank you for getting this for me. I guess we have a Double Potions after lunch... oh, I'm sorry, are you in Advanced Potions?"

"Yes, all my friends and I are in the same classes. We plan on working for the Ministry one day."

"Great! Well, then do you mind if I hang out with you?"

"Oh, absolutely! Just finish up, and we will go down and meet everyone before class."

Hermione quickly finished her food, anxious to finally get the initial meeting over with.

"So, do you or did you have a boyfriend?" Lily asked on their way down the stairs to the Great Hall.

"Um, no, I have had a few, but nothing serious. I actually have had a crush on somebody for a long time, but he never knew it and couldn't because, well... of age differences and all." Hermione had an urge to confide in Lily. Maybe it was because she looked like Harry, but Hermione felt she had known her for years.

"Sounds intriguing!" Lily said.

"Not really." Hermione fell silent thinking, about her feelings. Since the end of her fifth year, she had been lost in a school girl crush, and only fairly recently had she realized that she had true feelings for this person. It was during her time spent at Grimmauld Place, the summer between her sixth and seventh year, that had confirmed her feelings; she was in love with Severus Snape.

She had been his assistant that summer, working on a potion. He had asked for her specially, which came as a complete shock to her. She had always respected and stood up for him, but she had always thought he hated her, no matter how hard she tried to gain his acceptance.

But that summer was different.

She remembered arriving at Grimmauld Place and found him waiting in her room when she opened the door.

"Professor, what are you doing here?" she exclaimed.

"I apologize for coming into your private room, Miss Granger, but I need to ask you something."

"Yes, sir?"

"I have been asked to make a potion that will help Potter use an Unforgivable Curse while keeping his precious soul intact. The Headmaster seems to think that Potter doesn't have the strength to cast one--"

"But what about Priori Incantatem?"

"I didn't say he would use the curses on the Dark Lord. There are other people who are trying to kill Potter as well, and sometimes Expelliarmus isn't good enough."

"I see. So, what do you need me for?"

"I would like your help. The potion is very dangerous and takes two months to brew. If I should happen to... leave... during the middle of it, I will not be able to complete the process. I would like you to assist me and take over if and when I have to depart."

Hermione was shocked. "You... want me to help you, sir?"

"Why not? You are beyond capable, and I would not trust this potion with anyone else."

"I... thank you. Yes, I will help--I'm honored--but I do have to say, I'm in shock. I've always thought I was a pebble in your shoe."

He walked over to her in a few steps and was an arm's length away. "You have never been that, I assure you," he said. Then the snarl that he usually had on his face turned upside down into a small grin. Hermione had almost melted.

"Shite!" Hermione yelled, as she stepped through the vanishing step.

"Oh, damn! I'm sorry I forgot to tell you about that!" Lily said while helping Hermione up.

"It's okay; I wasn't paying attention anyway."

"I noticed," said Lily.

"Well, well. What do we have here?" said a sly voice emerging from the Great Hall. Hermione looked up, recognizing it.

"Sirius, this is Mione Jean. She's new here. Mione, this is Sirius Black, our resident ladies' man."

Sirius clutched his chest. "Ugh. I'm hurt, Lily. You make me sound so--"

"Cocky?" Lily said. Hermione giggled. She already knew the way Sirius had been in school. He was, of course, as handsome as she figured he would be. Then she remembered what he looked like after he spent twelve years in Azkaban, and she stopped laughing.

"Well, it's a pleasure to meet you, Mione," he said, pulling her hand to his lips, kissing it ever so gently.

"Thank you," said a blushing Hermione.

"Come on, let her go. We have things to do," Lily said. "Where are James, Remus and Peter?" At the mention of Peter Pettigrew, Hermione's stomach lurched.

"They went to Potions early; let's go down there."

"Why didn't you go with them?" Lily asked. Hermione was walking a step behind them, listening to every word.

"Oh. I had... an appointment with Donna from Hufflepuff," he said deviously.

"Good reason," Lily said.

Finally, they arrived at the door to the Potions classroom. Hermione felt like she was in a daze. Every day for the past six years, she had walked down to the same spot, and behind that door was the person she had feared the most, the person her heart couldn't live without. It was odd knowing that Snape wouldn't be there with his usual scowl on his face, barking orders and being overbearing. It was even odder knowing that the same demanding man was the one she worked closely with for the past two months, the man that she had come to love.

"This is James, Remus and Peter. Guys, this is Mione--she is from Beauxbatons," Lily said.

"Hi," she mumbled.

A deep sadness came over Hermione. She didn't want to be anywhere near the Potions classroom. Her heart was aching, knowing that she might not ever see Snape again if she was stuck here in the past. She slowly walked into the classroom, trying to hold back her tears and listen to the bumbling, chunky man at the front. She found an empty seat near the back of the classroom, behind James and Sirius. Lily introduced her to her new professor. Since they were still early to class, Hermione didn't have to deal with a lot of questions from her peers and was relieved; she just wanted to sit in the back and be gloomy, not outgoing and friendly.

"Where's Snivellus?" Sirius whispered to James. "He's usually the first one here. Speak of the devil..." Sirius and James turned their heads toward the entrance. Walking through the doors was a tall, thin boy. His black hair hung to the sides of his face, obscuring most of his features. His pale, hooked nose was the only thing that wasn't covered by his shoulder length hair. He was clutching several books to his chest and walked quickly.

Hermione's heart froze. Somehow she had forgotten that Snape went to school with James, Lily, Sirius and Remus. She watched him with wide eyes as he walked toward the back of the room, toward her. She nearly fell out of her chair when he sat next to her. *Oh, shite. Don't sit next to me; oh, shite.*

She now realized that she was holding her breath, and when he sat down and threw his books onto the table, she exhaled and then deeply inhaled again, trying to relax. She looked through the side of her eye as he moved. *Calm down, Hermione. Calm down. He doesn't know you. Oh, gods, he smells the same! Stop it! Ignore him. Oh, shite, he's looking at me.*

"Who are you?" he said coarsely.

Hermione couldn't talk. Her hands were flat on the table; she was breathing hard and sweating. She turned her head just enough to look at him through her own curtain of hair.

"Mione," she said very softly.

"What house are you in?" he asked.

"She's in Gryffindor, Snivellus. Leave her alone," Sirius said rudely.

Shut up, Sirius!

Snape snorted. "Figures, all the ugly ones go to that house."

"Bastard--" James began.

"*Levicorpus!*" shouted Sirius. Snape was thrust into the air, knocking Hermione to the ground and making some of their books topple onto of her. She shrieked in pain.

"MISTER BLACK! PUT HIM DOWN NOW!"

"Professor Slughorn, Snape insulted our new student. I was only--"

"Now, Mister Black!"

Sirius dropped Snape right on top of Hermione. "OW!" she hissed as Snape's body crushed into hers.

"Detention tonight, Mister Black, eight o'clock!" Slughorn shouted.

"Shite," Sirius said under his breath.

Snape was struggling on top of Hermione; he had never been this close to a girl and was suddenly feeling the effects of being on top of her. He swiftly jumped to his feet.

"Sorry for hurting you," he grumbled.

"I'm fine. Just a little sore in the stomach and side."

"I think you two need to go to the hospital wing. You landed pretty hard, Mister Snape," Slughorn suggested.

Hermione got to her feet with Lily's help. "You'll have to show her the way, Severus. Don't let her get lost," Lily said to the boy next to her.

"Hurry up," Snape said quietly to Hermione.

"Sorry, Mione." Sirius said as she walked past him.

"It's okay," she lied. She was furious at the way he had so quickly resorted to dueling. She had figured that Snape was going to say something cheeky about her being in Gryffindor and had actually been looking forward to hearing something that made her feel like she was back in her own time.

Snape walked fast, and she tried to keep up, but the pain in her side was bad, and she was starting to feel somewhat dizzy. "I'm sorry--please slow down. I'm not feeling so good here," she winced.

Snape turned around and saw her gripping her left side, looking clammy. He stepped closer to her. "Let me see; move your hand."

Hermione slowly moved her hand. Snape gently pushed open her outer robes, and lifted her jumper, revealing a huge bruise on her side. Hermione didn't dare move. Beneath all her pain, she was so excited at having him touch her like that. She remembered the accident she'd had while helping him on the potion during that wonderful summer.

"AHHHHHH!" she screamed.

"Shite!" Snape pulled Hermione into his body after the cauldron exploded, then whipped her around to check the extent of her injuries.

"Don't worry about me... the potion--is it ruined? Check it first!"

"Fuck the potion; you're more important! Where does it hurt?"

"My right arm, it's burning!"

"Let me see; move your hand."

Hermione moved her hand that was holding her shoulder. Snape gripped the collar of her shirt and ripped the long sleeve straight off of her. He tossed it to the ground and dragged her over to one of his cabinets. He retrieved some lotion from the shelf and took a scoop into his hands. He then rubbed the balm onto her shoulder, massaging it ever so gently. "How does that feel?"

"Much better, thank you; I'm sorry I screwed that up."

"You did no such thing; it slipped my mind that you haven't learned that mixing the clippings of dragon fingernails with something so delicate as fairy wings will cause it to explode. I apologize." He was still rubbing her arm and shoulder, even though most of the lotion was gone.

"Did I ruin the potion?"

"No, it's not ruined; it was supposed to do that. The explosion gives it a shock, taking it to the next level; I just failed to warn you. That will never happen again."

"Hmm... twenty-five points from Slytherin for such an obvious mistake, Professor," she smirked.

He had stopped rubbing her arm and looked into her eyes, astonished; he had never been teased by a student when the intent was not to hurt. He started laughing.

Hermione jolted back to reality when his cold hands touched her wound.

"I think I may have given you a cracked rib when I fell on you. Are you feeling dizzy?" he asked.

"Yes."

Snape pulled his wand from his concealed pocket and waved it over her body, muttering some incantation. She felt a warmth heating her insides, and the pain subsided, letting her stand without having to hunch over.

"How does that feel?"

"Much better--what was that?"

"Nothing you need to concern yourself with. We need to get you to the hospital wing quickly; it won't last long without the help of healing potions."

They started walking again. This time she was able to keep up with him.

"Back again, Mister Snape?" asked Madam Pomfrey from across the room as they entered the hospital wing.

"Yes."

"Mister Black or Mister Potter?"

"Black."

She rushed over to Snape, fussing over him. "Don't worry about me, I'm fine, just a tiny headache. Mione here was unfortunate enough to be my cushion as I fell; she may have a cracked rib. Oh, and she's new."

Madam Pomfrey ushered Hermione to a bed, and Snape sat down in the chair next to it, drinking from a small phial that he had obtained from a cabinet.

"Severus, I don't know why you don't just keep some of that for yourself," she said, referring to the headache potion.

"Don't want anyone to tamper with it," he remarked.

"You are always so paranoid! He's in here at least twice a week," Madam Pomfrey explained to Hermione.

"If it wasn't for Potter and Black, I wouldn't be," he said.

"From what I understand, you have caused some of your problems yourself."

"Like today," Hermione piped in.

"What did you do?" Madam Pomfrey asked as she handed Hermione some potions to drink.

Snape looked at Hermione. He hadn't really meant what he said; he thought she was the sweetest thing he had ever seen. But, he couldn't lose face in front of Black and Potter.

"I said something about Mione, which I shouldn't have."

"It's okay Pro... Severus, no harm done.*He isn't your professor here! Don't slip again!*

"Hmm... well, it looks like you have a fractured rib. You will need to stay here overnight so that I can watch you. And since this is your fault, Mister Snape, you will collect her work and bring it back here tonight."

"Yes, ma'am," he said quietly. Madam Pomfrey left them, and Snape stood up. His tie had loosened, and he was adjusting it while looking directly into her eyes. "I'm sorry for hurting you, but if you hadn't noticed, I despise Potter and Black."

"Believe me, I know," Hermione said.

He turned from her and left. Hermione snuggled down into the bed. She needed to rest; her head was hurting from everything that had happened within the past few hours.

Thanks to Lariope, who has done another wonderful job as beta for this entire story. *hugs*

Chapter 2

Chapter 2 of 9

Hermione accidentally, on purpose, uses a Time-Turner. What happens when she travels back to the Marauder era? What will become of her future? Travel with her as she embarks on a journey that no one, especially Severus Snape, will forget.

Hermione had awoken to find her bag and books on the chair along with her assignments from the day. She quietly read through some notes that Snape had left her and started on her homework.

When she returned to the Gryffindor common room, she was ambushed by her new friends.

"Mione, I'm so sorry; I didn't mean it. I was just trying to get *athim*. Snivellus is such a bastard," Sirius said the minute she walked through the portrait hole.

"Actually, I think that word is a little harsh, Sirius. Yes, he is cruel and mean, but not a bastard. He actually helped me and apologized for hurting me."

"No way--"

"Not Snivellus!"

"Yes, and his name is Severus."

"Don't tell me you have a sweet spot for the greasy git," James said.

"No. I'm new here, and I don't want to go making enemies just yet. But, thank you for your opinions; I'll keep them in mind."

"Come on, Mione. The boys are going to hang out by the Quidditch Stadium. We can take our books and study while they screw around," Lily said.

"Okay, at least one of you has their head on straight," Hermione joked.

A week had passed, and Hermione was already going mad. She didn't know how much longer she could stand being back in time. James and Harry were so much alike that each time she saw him, she wanted to cry. Lily had reminded her of Ginny, which made her think of Ron. She adored Remus and wished she could tell him who she was, being that he was going to be the only person who would be alive when she returned... if she ever returned. She ignored Peter, trying very hard to not hex him each time she saw him. Sirius was a flirt, and she enjoyed his attention and didn't want to deny him that pleasure, seeing as he was only three years away from being locked away in hell.

Then there was Snape. He hadn't talked to her since that first day. He had even changed his seat in Potions to the opposite side of the room. She couldn't take her eyes off of him--she wanted to be near him, to smell him and get to know him. Several times, she had been staring at him, and he had looked up like he knew she was watching him.

She had passed him on the way to her Muggle Studies class that afternoon; it was as if they were in slow motion as they walked directly next to each other, locking eyes for a split second, then turning away quickly. She yearned for him desperately, but didn't know how to approach him.

It was Friday night, which meant it was game night. Hufflepuff against Gryffindor. Hermione knew she needed to go and support James, but something in the back of her mind told her to stay at the school. She had explained to Lily that she was very tired and would meet up with her later.

Hermione was on the way back from the bathroom after having had a nice, refreshing shower, humming to herself along the empty corridor, when a hand shot across her face, and her body was wrapped into black robes and pulled inside an empty classroom.

"AHHHHHH...mpffff--mpffff!!!" She had started to scream, but her sounds were muffled by the cold hand. The classroom was very dark, and only a small sliver of moonlight was shining in toward the back of the room, leaving her in almost complete darkness.

"Calm down! I won't hurt you."

Severus! She stopped squirming, anticipating his next words.

"If I let you go, promise you won't scream?"

She nodded her head.

"Good girl." He removed his hand from her face and let his other one release her waist. "I've been watching you all week."

"You scared me to death! If you wanted to talk to me, you should have done it a different way!"

"Element of surprise. Keeps things interesting," he whispered.

"What do you want?"

"Potter and Black haven't done anything to me this week. What have you told them? And don't lie!"

"I don't know... They called you a bastard the day after I left the hospital wing, and I told them that you weren't one. Although, you *can* be cruel. And that you actually helped me. That's it; I swear."

"I don't need your fucking pity."

Hermione's heart sank at his use of words. "Pity? I do not pity you!"

"Then what do you call it?"

"Sticking up for someone I lo... like!"

He had grabbed her shoulders and pulled her closer. She could feel his breath as he spoke to her, and she wished he would kiss her.

"I told you not to lie to me."

"It's not a lie... I like you."

"Why?" he snapped.

"I just do!"

Snape released her and fled from the dark classroom, leaving Hermione bewildered.

Stupid girl. Doesn't she know who she's messing with? Potter and Black probably put her up to screwing with my mind. I'll get to the bottom of her nonsense, though. Watch out, Mione! Nobody pulls the wool over the Half-Blood Prince's eyes and gets away with it!

Hermione slowly left the empty classroom, walked back to her dorm and lay down on the bed.

Way to go, Granger. You just scared him off. You are here for a purpose, so do your job and stop dreaming of Severus... SNAPE! Think of him as Snape!

She pulled the blankets over her shivering body and drifted off to sleep.

It was early the next morning when she awoke and snuck down to the common room. Remus was sitting on the chair in front of the fire, looking very pale.

Without turning his head, he spoke to her. "Good morning, Mione. You're up awfully early."

She knew that he smelled her, but she had to play it off like she didn't know anything.

"How did you know it was me?"

"Sixth sense."

"Well, it seems *you* are the one who is up early."

"I never went to bed," he said.

She walked over to the other large chair across from him and sat down. "Why not?"

"I'm not feeling well. I get sick easily, and when I do, I usually can't sleep."

Hermione felt so bad for him; she wanted to show her support but couldn't. "I'm sorry to hear that. Did you go to the game?"

"Yes, we won. Did you not hear the party that was going on here last night?"

"I was fast asleep. It's been a long and strange week."

"Understandable. But you weren't alone, were you?" he said with a suspicious tone.

"I don't think I understand." Her heart started pumping harder.

"Hmm." He stood up and leaned over her and took a deep whiff of her body.

"Excuse me!" she said, shocked.

"I told you that I have a sixth sense about these things. What did he want?" He sat back down in the chair, waiting to hear her story.

"What did *who* want?"

"You know who. And you know that I know."

Before she could answer, the door to the common room flew open and someone came through the portrait hole.

"We'll continue this later," he whispered. "Ah, Sirius... sleep elsewhere last night?"

Sirius came strolling over to where they were sitting and plopped down next to Hermione, sighing with relief. He had pink lip prints on his cheek, his hair was untidy, his shirt was buttoned wrong, and his shoelaces were untied.

"Yep. Those twins in Ravenclaw have more energy than a crazy Cornish Pixie."

"Eww," Hermione said with disgust.

Remus started laughing. "Yes, well, don't complain. You brought that on yourself!"

"I know. I'm going to go bathe, then take a long nap." He looked over at Hermione. "Perhaps I could persuade you to give me a hand in the tub?" He smirked.

"Get out of here!" She chuckled. "Speaking of bathing, I'm going to go get a shower, head down to breakfast, and then do some homework, so I'll be back much later."

"Mmm... maybe I should lend you a hand in the tub?" Sirius said.

Hermione snorted at Sirius as she walked back up to the dorm to retrieve her bathroom items.

"I had to ask!" Sirius shouted from behind her.

Damn Remus Lupin and that nose! He knows about Severus... SNAPE! And you know he won't stop pestering you about it either.

"Hi, Lily. Did I wake you?" Hermione asked when she walked through the door.

"No, my stomach did. Too much butterbeer last night--we won, though!"

"Yes, Remus told me."

"You missed a great game... ugh! What type of perfume are you wearing?" Lily said, scrunching her nose. Hermione smelled her arm, the one that Sirius had been closest to.

"Essence of Ravenclaw twins. Courtesy of Sirius Black," Hermione said.

"Enough said." Lily giggled. "I warned you that he was a ladies' man."

"Yes, and a major flirt."

"Of course. The trick, though, is to get a boyfriend. Ever since James and I started dating, he has left me alone."

"I'm working on that," Hermione said quietly.

It had now officially been a month since she arrived in 1976. Halloween was a few days away, and Hermione had not yet started figuring out how to go about warning people about the coming years. She actually put it to the back of her mind; she was more interested in getting to know these people, especially the mysterious boy who would become the man she loved.

After Snape cornered her in the classroom a few weeks ago, he had only talked to her once, when they were paired in D.A.D.A.

"Come on! Give me all you've got," he taunted her.

"You don't want me to hex you. I'll make your eyes cross!" she shot back.

The class was outside by the Black Lake, practicing, and Snape took her to an area that was the furthest from the rest of the class. They had been paired and were told to cast defensive spells against each other. Snape had only done a small spell on her; he didn't want to hear her cry. But, when she stood back up, he realized that he had underestimated the new girl.

"Rictusempra!" she shouted.

Snape fell to the floor laughing; it was like a thousand hands were tickling him to death. Hermione walked over to him and released the jinx. He was lying on the ground looking up into her eyes, thinking she was going to hex him again. He tried to reach for his wand without moving too much, but it wasn't near him.

"You should laugh more often, Severus. You look very handsome when you do." Hermione left him there on the ground and walked back toward the class.

That was all Snape needed to decide that this witch had lost her mind. *Handsome?* He had never heard that word directed toward him. Black, maybe, but not him. He was still lying on the ground when another person leaned over him, blocking the sun and creating a silhouette.

"What did you do to her, Snivellus? I saw her storm off after she attacked you."

"Sod off, Black."

Snape rolled onto his side, away from Sirius, gathered his wand and jumped to his feet.

"You're pathetic. Letting a girl out-duel you."

"You're pathetic, thinking that your usual tactics of seduction will work on a girl like her! I've seen the way you flirt with her!" Snape snapped back.

"On a girl like her? Tell me, Snivellus, do you like Mione?"

Snape had started to walk away when Sirius tripped him. "You do, don't you? Severus Snape, the greasy git of the dungeons, actually likes a girl! And a Gryffindor girl, for that matter! I guess that means those rumors that you're gay aren't true--"

"I said, sod off! *Incarcerous!*" Thick ropes jumped out of Snape's wand and bound Sirius' arms to his body, causing him to topple over. Snape turned and left him there. Sirius was trying to wiggle himself free.

Great. Now the whole school will think that I like that annoying girl. I better get her alone before he has a chance to rot her mind.

Hermione was talking with Lily when Severus approached her. "We are supposed to be working together for the remainder of the class; you still owe me fifteen minutes of your time." Hermione grinned and then followed Snape toward the edge of the Lake.

"Okay, you have my attention. What would you like to practice now?"

"Nothing, I just needed to warn you about something."

"What?" she said, sounding serious.

"Black. He saw you jinx me, and we got into another argument. Basically, now he thinks I like you and will be telling the whole school as much. By the end of the day, no doubt."

"And?" she huffed.

"AND? I DON'T LIKE YOU--I mean... err... I was just warning you!"

"Fine, you warned me," she said sadly and tried to walk past him.

"Mione," he grabbed her arm, "I'm sorry; that didn't come out correctly. I figured you would be disgusted by the thought that I would like you."

"Disgusted? I meant what I said earlier. You should laugh more often." She pulled out of his grip and walked away. He ran after her.

"Mione, wait. Look, I'm not a nice person. Don't try to be friends with me."

"I'll do what I want." She kept walking.

"Err, woman! You are driving me insane. Stay away from me--I'm no good!"

She stopped and turned to him. "No good? Why do you say that about yourself?"

"Nothing. Don't worry about it."

She took a step closer to him, looking up at him with caring eyes. "Severus, there's a Hogsmeade weekend coming up. Would you like to join me?"

"I... I don't go there. No."

"How about I stay behind?"

"Is this some sort of joke that you and your friends are trying to pull?"

"No, you jerk! I'm trying to ask you out, and you are making this very difficult! Forget it!"

Hermione ran off in tears. Severus stood there, angry. He blamed Potter and Black--he was always suspicious of things, and now, when something genuine came along, he ruined it.

"She really does like you, Severus," said a soft voice from behind some bushes.

Snape turned, pulling his wand out, and faced Remus.

"Lupin. Get out of here."

"No, Severus. I heard every word. You are acting like a fool, thinking she has some sort of plot to trick you. She really does fancy you; believe me, I can sense it."

"What do you care?"

"I care about her because she's my friend, and I don't want to see her unhappy--and trust me, she has been very unhappy this past month. She's scared, and she thinks she's alone. She may put on a good front, but I know when she's been crying, and I know when she's angry, just like I know that you don't really hate her. So, please give her a chance. I think she would be good for you," Lupin stated.

"Damn you and your extra senses. Fine! There's no use in lying to you, but so help me, Lupin, if word of this gets to Black or Potter, I will--"

"I know, I know. You'll tell the entire school I'm a werewolf."

"Damn straight. Now move. I have to go ask someone out on a bloody date."

Severus pushed passed a smiling Lupin and hiked over to where Hermione was standing. He walked up behind her and leaned down to her ear, whispering quietly, "I'm sorry."

Hermione stiffened, but didn't turn her head, just continued to listen to the boy behind her.

"I would like it very much if you stayed behind this weekend. I want to take you somewhere special here on the grounds; is that okay?"

She shrugged her shoulders, playing hard to get.

"I promise I won't be an arse. I do like you--a lot. I'm just scared."

Finally, Hermione turned around and faced him.

"Me too," she said looking up into his dark eyes. "Meet me in the Great Hall Saturday, then."

"She must be hiding somewhere, Harry. You know when she wants to be alone, we can't find her."

"No, Ron. Something isn't right. Hermione has been missing for a full day! We can't even find her on the map! I think we need to tell Professor McGonagall."

"Fine, let's go."

Harry and Ron walked down to her office and knocked, but there was no answer. "It's getting late. Maybe she's doing rounds before bed? Why don't we go get your map to find her more easily?"

"Good idea."

They started jogging up the stairs, but stopped because the stairs had started to move. They clutched the rails and waited for them to stop, but at the top of the landing waited the one person they were not looking for.

"Out wandering the halls again? You're lucky you have fifteen minutes to curfew. However, by the way you two were running--you weren't headed off to bed. Twenty points from Gryffindor."

"Professor Snape, please! It's Hermione," Ron pleaded.

"She's missing!" Harry shouted.

Snape raised his eyebrow. "Missing?"

"She's been gone for over twenty-four hours, and nobody has seen her! We have searched everywhere!"

"Over twenty-four hours?" he said slowly.

"Yes!" Harry bellowed.

"Shite." Snape pushed passed them and started running down the stairs, with Harry and Ron at his heels.

"Sir! What is going on?" Ron said

"Is it... Vold--"

Snape stopped suddenly, making Ron almost run into the back of him.

"How many times have I told you NOT to say his name in front of me!" he said to Harry.

"Sorry, but what's going on? Does *he* have anything to do with her disappearance?" Harry asked.

"Not directly. Fetch the Headmaster; I have to get something. I will meet you three in his office." He turned and started back down the stairs. Despite being nearly twenty years their senior, he was able to outrun Harry and Ron.

The boys went up to Dumbledore's office and started shouting all sorts of passwords to the gargoyle.

"He won't open up because I'm not in my office," said a tender voice from behind them.

"Professor Dumbledore! Hermione's been missing for over twenty-four hours, and Professor Snape told us to tell you and that he would meet us here in your office!" shouted Harry.

"She's missing? Oh, dear. Go inside, quickly." The stone gargoyle opened up, and Harry and Ron ran up the spiral stairs and into the office, hoping that Snape would be in there waiting on them. Instead, a raven patronus was floating around the office.

"Personal," the raven Patronus said in Snape's voice as Dumbledore walked into the room and spotted it. Then it disappeared.

"What was that?" Ron asked.

"I thought you said Severus went to get something?" Dumbledore said to Harry, ignoring Ron.

"He did--what's going on?" Harry said.

"He's been summoned. I don't think he will be making it to our meeting."

"Summoned! Couldn't he have waited until he told us where Hermione is?"

"No, you heard his Patronus. It said *personal*, meaning Voldemort specifically wanted to see him at that moment in time, and he had to go or would be severely hurt. What was he going to go get?"

"He didn't say. We told him she's been missing for over twenty-four hours, and he cursed and started running down the stairs. We followed him and asked what was going on, and that's when he told us to meet him here."

Dumbledore walked over to the fireplace and Floo-called Remus Lupin. "Please come here, Remus; it's urgent." In a flash, the D.A.D.A. teacher emerged from the fire. Since Kingsley Shacklebolt had taken over the Ministry, Remus was able to come back to Hogwarts and continue teaching.

"Remus, Hermione is missing. Severus was summoned, but he was supposed to meet me here with Harry and Ron. Have you seen her?"

"No," he said with a worried look on his face.

"I think we will have to wait until Severus gets back. He must know something that I don't." He turned to Harry and Ron. "I will alert you as soon as he returns. Until then, keep searching for her. But first, we will let the Order know she's missing, and we can search the grounds more thoroughly."

"She's not on the grounds, sir," Harry said.

"How do you know?" asked Dumbledore.

Harry turned his fixed glare on Remus. "She's not on the map."

Lupin's eyes widened.

"Map?" asked Dumbledore.

"Never mind about that right now, Albus. Hermione's in danger," Lupin said.

Thanks Lariope for betaing this chapter--again.

Chapter 3

Hermione accidentally, on purpose, uses a Time-Turner. What happens when she travels back to the Marauder era? What will become of her future? Travel with her as she embarks on a journey that no one, especially Severus Snape, will forget.

Hermione was thrilled that Severus had finally opened up and admitted that he liked her. She wondered what had changed his mind. She was excited about her date and wanted to look good, but of course, she didn't have too many clothes.

Very early Saturday morning, Hermione snuck up to the Room of Requirement and asked for more Muggle clothing. Some nice jeans and a halter-top appeared in front of her. She picked up the shirt and looked at it with reservation. *I surely will make him nervous if I wear this! Oh, well.*

Hermione took her belongings and ran down to the bathrooms, where she showered and put herself together. Then, she rushed down to the Great Hall. Everyone that was going to Hogsmeade was meeting by the Hogwarts gates, so the large room was relatively empty. She didn't know what time he was going to show, but she waited patiently. Slowly, the doors cracked open, and her heart started fluttering. Severus walked in, and Hermione blushed after seeing him.

He was wearing black trousers and boots and a black, long-sleeved, button up shirt, with the sleeves rolled up his to his elbows. He had pulled his hair back into a slim ponytail, leaving several strands around his face. These were apparently his best clothes; she knew he didn't have a lot, but neither did she.

"I didn't know if you would be here yet," he said as he walked up to her. She rose from the bench and picked up her sweater.

"You look dashing," she said.

He smiled. "You look... delectable."

"Thanks," she gushed. "So, where are you taking me?"

"To my favorite spot. Of course, it's somewhat of a hike. So, are you up for it?"

"Yes--lead the way."

"Here, let me help you; it's a little chilly outside." He reached for her sweater and helped her put it over her bare arms. Then he cast a warming charm over the both of them.

They walked out past the doors and down toward the boathouse.

"I have to ask and then I will drop it, but why me? Why not Black?"

"You just are very enchanting to me. Sirius is a flirt. I mean, don't get me wrong, a girl does like to be flirted with, but not when it won't mean anything the next day... Do you understand that?"

"I believe so."

"What made you change your mind about meeting me?"

"Someone pointed out that I was acting like a fool. And I was. I get suspicious about things."

"Well, whoever it was is right. You *were* acting like a fool. I know this is new to you, but I hope you can trust me. I wouldn't do anything to hurt you... unless you hurt me first, then--WATCH OUT!" She put her hands up like claws and growled.

"Oooh. Scary."

"Yes--you'd better be scared! I'm a very powerful witch!"

"I've been noticing. Some of the things you do, they... remind me of myself. Especially your work in Potions class. You use some of the same techniques that I do."

Hermione had to laugh. *Of course I would, Severus! You were the one who taught me!*

"Why are you laughing?"

"Just because, um... I didn't think you noticed me, actually, and yet you have been watching me very carefully. That's just funny because I can't seem to take my eyes off of you."

He stopped walking and looked at her calculatingly like he did when she was his student in the future.

"Something wrong?" she asked.

"No. You are very open with your feelings. I'm not, so please don't think something is wrong when I get quiet. You just stun me sometimes. Nobody has really ever paid any attention to me in a good way; this takes some getting used to."

She didn't know what to say to that, so for once she kept her mouth closed and looked at him with loving eyes.

"Come. We are almost there," he said while holding his hand out. She slowly placed her hand into his and laced her fingers between his. She was very impressed that he had made such a bold move.

They walked silently the rest of the way, holding hands. Hermione took this opportunity to remember another time when he had left her speechless during that special summer.

"Professor! You're back!"

"Indeed. How is the potion brewing coming along?"

"Very well; no problems with it. But I'm another story," she said.

"How do you mean?"

"You've been gone for almost a week; I've been stuck in this room, almost going stir crazy. I need a break. I mean--don't take this to mean I'm not excited that you are safely back, because I am; I just need to relax my mind."

"I can tell. You start rambling when you get exhausted."

"Oh, I'm sorry."

"It's okay; I've had those days. In fact, I had a similar week, stuck somewhere where I did not want to be."

"With He-Who-Must-Not-Be-Named?" she said quietly.

He looked up at her calculatingly.

"I'm not stupid, Professor. I know you're a Death Eater."

"I never said you were. How long have you known?"

"Since the end of fourth year."

"Really? And that doesn't bother you?" he said, surprised.

"Nope. I know where your loyalties lie. What bothers me most is knowing that you might be summoned one day and never return." Before she turned around, she saw his eyebrow shoot up.

"Well, since you know where I was, then you will understand that I, too, need a break. The potion will be fine for now; we have plans."

"Plans?"

He walked up to her and handed her two tickets to a play in Muggle London.

She looked up at him.

"We both need to clear our heads."

"Thank you! I can't wait, but, sir, is this appropriate?"

"Do you think this Death Eater gives a damn?" He smirked. "Besides, I already informed Dumbledore what I was going to do two weeks ago, and he had no problems with it."

She stood there speechless, realizing that he had planned on taking her out to get some fresh air before he was summoned. And he was making a joke! About being a Death Eater, no less.

"Okay, climb in," Snape said when they reached the boathouse, jolting her back to reality.

"We're going for a boat ride?" she said as she stepped into the small boat.

"Yes, every time there is a weekend at Hogsmeade, I get into a boat and go across to the other side. I don't go into town for two reasons: Black and Potter."

He finished helping her in, stepping inside himself. After a few wand movements, the boat started moving out of the slip and onto the huge lake. "You see, last time I went there, they ambushed me and left me there, hurt. They only received a week's worth of detention."

"Why did they do that?"

"Probably because when they were walking into Zonko's Joke Shop, I made all their clothes disappear, leaving them starkers. It was very cold that day, too. Needless to say, I haven't gone back. I'm no fool; I know if they were able to get me alone there again, they might kill me. It wouldn't be the first time they have attempted that."

"I know. I mean--that's horrible, Severus Snape! So you DO start some of the battles."

"You know? They told you they tried to kill me a few years ago?"

"No... I didn't know that. I meant that I know they would probably do something terrible to you if they caught you in Hogsmeade again." She needed to change the subject. "So, I hear there is a giant squid in this lake?"

"Yep, and he fancies Gryffindors, especially girls... Hold on now!" Severus started rocking the small boat back and forth, almost causing them to tip over.

"SEVERUS SNAPE! STOP IT! THE WATER IS FREEZING! YOU'RE GOING TO MAKE US TIP!"

Snape was howling with laughter, watching her panic. She had jumped closer to him, hitting him in the arms, trying to make him stop. Water splashed into the boat, and he decided enough was enough. He grabbed her waist and pulled her closer to him, sitting her on his lap.

"Did I scare you?" he said. His face was inches from hers; she knew he was flirting with her.

"A little," she said in a small voice.

The boat lurched forward as it hit the small bank of sand. But, he didn't let her go.

"We're here," he said as he gazed into her chestnut eyes.

"Okay," she said absentmindedly. She felt her pulse raging throughout her body.

Kiss me.

They were silent for only a moment, listening to the wind whistling through the trees and the water splashing against the boat. Severus leaned into her, brushing his lips against hers, keeping his eyes opened to see if she rejected him. Then he saw her close her eyes, and he fully kissed her.

He was tentative at first, barely touching her lips, and then she relaxed and let him come to her. He felt her kiss strengthen as he leaned to the side to fully capture her lips. She slowly parted them, and he put his hand on the back of her head, bringing her further in.

Slowly, their tongues found each other, and they were breathing heavily through their noses. Then, they pulled apart and looked at each other intensely. Severus was fully hard and knew that if she didn't get away from him, he was going to embarrass himself by ejaculating into his own pants. "Let's get out of this boat. I think you will enjoy where we are going much more." He pushed her off his lap, hoping that she didn't notice his erection.

"Thank you; that was wonderful," she said as he grabbed her hand again and started walking up a large embankment.

He squeezed her hand, and he knew that she had enjoyed that as much as he did. They finally reached the peak of the hill. It looked over the Black Lake and had a spectacular view of Hogwarts in the background.

"Wow," she said.

"I knew you would like it here better than going to Hogsmeade. Watch out--I brought us something."

"You did?" She moved to the side and watched him pull a tea towel from his pocket and transfigure it into a large blanket. Then, he conjured a small picnic basket that held two place settings, butterbeer, and some sandwiches.

"Severus, this is really lovely. Thank you."

She sat down on the blanket and watched him pour their drinks into clear glasses. "I told you I wasn't going to be an arse. I'm a Slytherin; we are taught how to treat a lady."

"Really?"

"Indeed. It's called having class."

"I think they need to teach that to all males. Who teaches this to you?"

"Well, it's been a tradition for Slytherins for many years. Currently, a former student teaches us. He graduated in my second year; his name is Lucius Malfoy. Have you heard of him?"

"Umm, no," she said uneasily.

"Hmm. Well, you will. He's very rich and powerful and has many ties to the Ministry."

"You don't say."

"Of course, it's the basic stuff that he teaches, says we have to use our own cunning minds. So, I figured since you seem to be a lot like me, you would enjoy this view, the peace and quiet and a nice lunch to go along with it. I'm glad to see that you like it."

Well, that made her feel a little better. He had planned this date all on his own, without the help of Lucius!

"Yes, I really do love this."

They lay down on the blanket and talked for hours. Hermione hated having to lie to him about certain things. She did her best to be honest, but twisted the truth to make it look like she really had come from Beauxbatons. Luckily, her parents had made her learn to speak French, so she talked to him for a while in the beautiful language. He had propped himself up on his side and listened intensely as she talked. He was mesmerized by her ability--of course, he had no idea what she was saying, so he didn't know she was confessing her undying love to him--not yet anyway.

Snape actually broke down some of his walls with her. He mentioned how his parents fought a lot and that he hadn't been home for the holidays since his third year. He also told her about different ways of casting spells and creating potions. He flirted with her more and teased her about her hair. Then he did something that particularly touched her; he made her sit in front of him as he took his wand to her thick, bushy hair and straightened it, leaving it long, sleek and smooth.

"I love it! You'll have to show me that spell!"

"You'll have to earn it," he said.

She pinched him and giggled, scrambling to get away. He chased her around the top of the hill and started tickling her.

"Think you can pinch me and get away with it?"

She was laughing hard. "YES! STOP!! Oh gods, I'm so ticklish!"

He was so much bigger and stronger than she was, and he easily wrapped his arms around her, carrying her back over to the blanket, all the while tickling her. He dropped her on her feet, but she stumbled from laughing so hard and fell to the ground on her bottom. He dropped to his knees and leaned over her, still wrestling with her.

"If you don't stop, I'll hex you!" she squealed.

He was now hunched completely over her, using one hand to prop himself up over her body. He placed his knees between her legs and stopped tickling her. He reached up and moved a piece of her hair that had fallen across her face, giving Hermione goose bumps. She stopped laughing and placed her hands around his waist, helping him to lower himself on top of her. Slowly, his lips came down on hers again, as well as his body. She felt his erection stabbing her in her crotch, but she wanted his kiss more than anything.

He clutched her hair and pushed himself harder into her. She moaned through the kiss and started to suckle on his lower lip. "Oh, damn woman!" he said as she pulled away from his lips. He hungrily went for more. By this time, they were dry humping, but then Severus pulled away and rolled off of her.

"Mione. No. Not like this. I've been taught better."

"What do you mean, not like this?"

"This is our first date; it's disrespectful for me to act like such an animal. Besides, we aren't prepared; at least, I didn't drink any contraceptive potion, did you?"

They were breathing deeply, lying on the ground and looking toward the darkening sky.

"No, I didn't. I'm sorry for rushing you. You just make me so excited." *You are going to scare him off! You've been in love with him for a while now, and he just started acknowledging his feelings for you... give him time!*

"You, rush me? I thought I was rushing you!" he said as he rolled over and looked at her.

"No, you didn't; I would have told you to stop if you had."

"You've been telling me to stop all day."

"You know what I mean," she snorted. "I wouldn't be laughing and giggling if I was serious."

"Come on. It's starting to get dark. But I promise you, I don't want to leave. I just know it's the right thing to do."

"I know. You're right. We should be prepared," she said.

"Not only that, but, Mione... would you like to go steady with me?"

"I was hoping you would ask. Yes, of course." She smiled so hugely that her jaw hurt. After sealing their new union with a kiss, they stood up, gathered their picnic belongings and headed back down to the boat.

During the ride across the lake, they heard howling. Hermione closed her eyes, thinking about Remus in the Shrieking Shack. She decided that she would get some chocolate and have one of the house-elves deliver it to his bed, so that when he returned, he would have something to help soothe away the effects of his transformation. She remembered how he used to always offer her chocolate to make her and the boys feel better, and now it was her turn to return the favor.

They walked back to the castle, holding hands, and left each other at the stairs. He was going down to the dungeons, and she was going up to the seventh floor. He kissed her on the cheek, and she watched him walk away.

She was *finally* his girlfriend.

Thanks to Lariopé!

Chapter 4

Chapter 4 of 9

Hermione accidentally, on purpose, uses a Time-Turner. What happens when she travels back to the Marauder era? What will become of her future? Travel with her as she embarks on a journey that no one, especially Severus Snape, will forget.

Another month had passed since Hermione and Severus had started dating, and they were still keeping their romance a secret. They hadn't had much time together between school, Severus' after hour classes taught by Lucius, and Hermione spending time with her friends, but they did manage to sneak off during the weekends, especially during Quidditch matches.

On one date, Hermione took Severus up to the Room of Requirement, which he had no idea was there. They spent several hours walking in front of it, asking for different things. Hermione took him to the room where everything was hidden. They went through mounds of discarded items, laughing at some of the things people had hidden and were amazed at some of the treasure they found. Severus decided he could use some of the older books he found and took them with him as they left. He had also found some old silver hair clips and helped Hermione pin back her long hair. She thought she had seen them before, and then she remembered she had.

"Good evening, Miss Granger. Are you ready?"

"Good evening, Professor. Yes, I did everything you asked. I went to town and bought everything on your list. I also took the liberty of buying some new books that I found at Flourish and Blotts; I hope you don't mind... it's just to keep busy while the potion brews."

He smirked at her. "I would expect nothing less from you, Miss Granger."

He reached into his robes and pulled a small box out of a pocket. "I have something for you." He handed her the box, and she slowly opened it. Inside were two silver hair clips.

"It's a safety precaution. Your hair tends to get out of hand, and we cannot have this potion contaminated."

"Thank you, but they look so antique. I wouldn't want to ruin them."

"You won't."

Hermione pulled them from the box and clipped her hair away from her face.

He watched her the entire time.

On another date, Severus took her atop the Astronomy tower and taught her how to duel better. She thought she had been an adequate dueler, but she was nothing compared to him. He was quick, smooth, and silent. His wordless magic was amazing. Of course, she understood why people said that he was very into the Dark Arts--his choice of magic was dangerous, but he never turned his wand on her.

It was difficult for Hermione to stay away from him during class. He didn't want anyone knowing about them just yet, because once they did, they were going to be harassed by everyone, especially the two people he hated most. Several times, she caught herself staring at him, but would quickly turn away before he noticed.

Sirius hadn't stopped flirting with her either. It was actually getting worse; now, he was trying to get her alone any chance he could get. One night, she snuck off, on her way to meet Severus in the Room of Requirement, when she began to get the feeling that someone was following her. Instead of going to the room, she headed down the stairs toward the library, listening very closely. Then she had a sickening feeling in her stomach. *James' invisibility cloak! Damn!* She thought she heard the familiar swish of the cloak; she had been under it so many times before. She stopped in a corridor, wondering if she should pretend she didn't know about the cloak or confront her follower head on.

She abruptly turned around and reached out with her hands swinging them widely. Finally, she hit the invisible wall and yanked the cloak off to reveal Sirius' head.

"Oh Shite! How did you know?"

"I have my ways, Sirius Black! Why are you following me?" she shouted.

"I'm sorry, Mione. I just can't help it... I want you. I wanted to get you alone, so we could talk."

He had pinned her against the wall with his hands on either side of her, breathing down her neck.

"Sirius, have you been drinking?"

"Just a bit. I nicked some firewhiskey from my mother. I keep a stash of it in my trunk."

He leaned over and kissed Hermione roughly. She punched him in the gut, causing him to bend over and yelp in pain.

She tried to slip past him, but he grabbed her arm and swung her back against the wall. Her elbows hit the rough stone surface, and the jolt to her head gave her a moment of blurring vision.

"OW! SIRIUS--STOP!" she screamed. Holding her against her will, he kissed her again, shoving his tongue between her sealed lips. She couldn't breathe, her head was aching and she was starting to panic. She couldn't move her arms to reach for her wand, and he had her half lifted against the wall, where she could barely kick her legs. She was screaming from the back of her throat when suddenly Sirius was ripped off her lips and thrown to the ground. Something black was on top of him.

Then, Hermione saw Severus' profile. He was attacking Sirius, punching him across the face, like a Muggle. Blood was on his knuckles and she thought he was surely going to kill the boy.

"YOU FUCKING TOUCHED MY GIRLFRIEND! YOU BASTARD!" He slammed his fist into Sirius' face again. The crack of his nose was almost deafening.

"SEVERUS, STOP, STOP! NOW, SEVERUS! LET GO!" Hermione scrambled over to the animal in front of her and tried pulling back on his arm, but he was too strong, and she fell backward onto the ground, hitting her head once again.

Severus must have heard Hermione fall over because he quickly turned around to see her sprawled across the stone floor. She was seeing stars but could make out his outline. He quickly jumped off of Sirius to check on her. Before he could do any healing charms though, he was tackled from the side by Sirius and thrown into the wall.

This time it was Severus' turn to be punched repeatedly in the face. Because Severus was the taller of the two, he was able to use his long legs to push Sirius off of him, giving him time to pull his wand out. "*Stupefy!*" he yelled at Sirius. A bolt of red light hurled out of his wand and knocked Sirius down.

Hermione tried to move, but suddenly all went black.

"MISTER SNAPE!"

Shite!

"Professor McGonagall, he was attacking Mione, he's been drinking!" Snape shouted in defense.

"Go get Madam Pomfrey! Tell her I'm on the way up with two unconscious students! And don't you leave until I get there!"

"Yes ma'am," he mumbled, running off toward the hospital wing.

"So, yet again, he gets a week of detention, and I get two weeks, because I started the fight."

"I know it's unfair, Severus dear, but that's the Hogwarts rule. The person who started the fight gets the harsher punishment. I think it's time for a change though. However, that's not why he got the detention; he is being punished for forcing himself on Mione and being drunk. They said fighting with you was self-defense."

"Figures. Dumbledore hates me, just like everyone else."

"Oh, Severus. It wasn't Dumbledore who handed out the punishment: it was Professor McGonagall; she's the one who caught you."

"Well in that case, she hates me. Why do they always stick up for those prats! He could have really hurt Mione!"

"Just like you hurt him?"

"I had to defend her. I was so pissed when I saw her screaming and him not letting her go, I didn't even reach for my wand; I just attacked like a filthy Muggle."

"Well, don't be ashamed of that. Of course, you didn't hear that from me. So, you had to defend her, hmm? I haven't seen you in here for a while. Do tell."

"She's my girlfriend. *I'm* the only one who is allowed to kiss her. And he put his disgusting hands and lips on her, treating her like the whores he is used to."

"Severus, watch your language! Although, I do know what you mean. I'm glad you found a girlfriend. She must be doing you some good since this is the first time you have been in here for the past few months."

"Yes, she is."

"By the look in your eye, I think there is more to it than that."

"You really know how to read me, don't you?"

"Of course. You're the only student I have seen on a consistent basis, so yes, I know you very well."

"Yeah. Well, you're right. There is more. I love her. But I haven't said anything, I'm trying to take it slow. I don't want to scare her off, but after tonight, I don't know if she'll forgive me for acting like a maniac."

"I think she'll understand. Have you two..."

"Not yet, I'm waiting for the perfect time."

"Well, you know where I keep the contraceptive potions. Take what you need. If you are going to do it, be smart about it."

"I know."

"There, that should heal your wounds nicely. I want to keep her overnight. You can come back up in the morning to see her; she should be awake then."

"Thanks, Madam Pomfrey."

Hermione felt a gentle kiss on her cheek. They had no idea that she had woken and heard every word, but she had laid perfectly still, wanting to hear him talk. *He loves me, he really loves me. YES!*

With great difficulty, Hermione forced her smile away and fell back to sleep, extremely happy.

Hermione was disappointed that Severus didn't return the next morning. Poppy was finishing checking over the small bump on her head and giving her some instructions on the different potions she was going to give her. She re-dressed in her clothes from the previous night and left the hospital wing.

When she walked into the hall, Severus was leaning on the opposite wall. When he saw her come through the doors, he stood up, trying to read her expression.

"Hi," she said.

"Hey. You okay?"

"Yes, I'm fine. Just a little tender. You?"

"Fine. I'm used to it. Look, I'm really sorry for acting like that and then causing you to hurt yourself--"

She put her hand up to stop him from talking.

"Don't. You were protecting me, I should have used my wand to pull you off of him, not tried to do it physically. It was an accident on your part. Thank you for standing up for me though. However, do try to remember that he is my friend, and I don't want you killing anyone. I don't want a boyfriend in Azkaban."

"Your friend? You're still going to be friends with him! He tried... he forced... you know what he did!"

"Oh, believe me, I'm sure he's hearing it from our friends, but he has yet to hear it from *me*. However, I'm going to stay friends with him. I don't like to hold grudges."

Snape snorted. "Fine, but if he tries it again, I will not stop him!"

"I understand," she said.

"So, we are... okay?" he asked timidly.

"Yes, what makes you think differently?"

Snape shoulders slouched forward and he lowered his head. "I didn't know if I scared you off."

Hermione wrapped her arms around his neck and kissed him. "What do you think now?"

He smiled at her. "Are you hungry?"

"Starving. Kiss me again."

"Not for that."

"Oh, sorry," she giggled. "Yes, I'm hungry."

"Good, so am I. Let's go eat something then start studying; we have exams in two weeks."

She unhooked her arms from around his neck, and he wrapped his arms around her body, bringing her closer to him. He bent down and gave her a long, wet kiss.

"Mmm. Thank you. By the way--you told Sirius that I was your girlfriend--everyone will now know."

"Good. I want everyone to know that you are mine and to stay away. I guess keeping it a secret didn't protect you from anymore harm than telling them would have. Maybe if we had said something, he wouldn't have tried that. Well, I guess we can't go back in time to fix it. I'm sorry," he said.

Well, if my damn Time-Turner was working we could. Speaking of which, I'd better start wearing it--if someone should find it in my belongings... Ugh, I shudder to think what would happen!

"Are you going home for the holidays?" he asked her before they walked into the Great Hall.

"Nope. Why?"

Snape pulled open the doors and walked in. "Just wondering," he said with a smirk.

After they enjoyed breakfast together, Severus walked Hermione up to the seventh floor, so that she could get her study materials and speak to Sirius.

"I'll be back in a few minutes, do you want me to meet you somewhere?" she asked.

"No, I'll wait for you right here."

Hermione walked into her common room, preparing herself to see Sirius. As she suspected, he was waiting on the couch, along with her other friends.

"Hi, Mione. How are you feeling?" Lily asked.

"I'll feel better once I've had a chat with Sirius, do you guys mind?"

"No problem," James said. He and Peter followed Remus out of the room.

When Lily walked by Sirius, she smacked him upside his head. "Behave," she told him.

"Mione, I know what I did was unforgivable--"

"Sirius, please be quiet. Let me speak first. As much as I am flattered that you find me attractive, I am not interested in you that way. When a girl tells you no, she means it. You must listen to the tone of voice. I wasn't giggling and playing hard to get, I was serious. You need to learn the difference."

"I never wanted you to get hurt. I'm so sorry."

"It's okay. You *did* deserve the beating Severus gave you, though."

"I know. I didn't know you were his girlfriend; if I had known, I swear I would never have made any advances on you."

"I know, that's my and Severus' fault. We thought if you knew, you and James would make life even worse for him, and maybe even stop being my friend."

"Never. I may dislike him, but if that's who makes you happy, then I will be completely supportive. My friends are like my family to me, and I never want to lose my family. I

have become an outcast from my real family, so James, Remus, Lily, Peter and you are all I have."

"I know, Sirius. I know friendship means the world to you--that's why I'm still your friend after this incident."

"So, you forgive me?"

She sat down next to him. "Of course, but I haven't forgotten. If *ever* see, or hear you forcing yourself on anyone ever again, drunk or not, I promise you will wish you were never born."

"Thanks, Mione. I promise, I will never do that again."

"Good."

"So, Severus Snape... May I ask why?"

"Yes, Severus Snape. He makes my heart flutter. And I know what you are going to say--"

"That he's dangerous? Well, I guess you could say that I am, too. If he hurts you, I'm going to be the one beating *him*."

"Understandable. So are you guys going to let your little feud die on my behalf?"

"And give up my favorite form of entertainment? Never. But, I won't be as harsh. We have an unspoken understanding, see. Hasn't he told you?"

"Told me what?"

"Our fighting goes back and forth. He starts something, I finish it. I start something, he finishes it. Been that way for years. I don't think normal people would call it friendship, but it's something twisted and wicked."

Hermione remembered all those times they meet each other at Grimmauld Place. They still bantered back and forth, trying to show each other up, and she started laughing in her mind.

"Well, he did tell me that you tried to kill him one year, but wouldn't give me the details."

"Ah, yes. That one was pretty stupid, I admit."

"I'm sure it was. Well, he's waiting on me to go study." She gave him a hug, and he slowly hugged her back. "It's okay to hug me, that's what friends do."

"Okay."

Hermione left Sirius and went to her room, gathered her book bag and trotted back down to the common room.

James, Remus, Lily and Peter had returned.

"So, we hear that you're dating Severus," Remus said.

"Yes, sorry you had to hear it from Sirius and not me--"

"It wasn't Sirius who told us. Severus is waiting outside the portrait hole for you, and we heard it from him. I believe his exact words were, 'Mione and I are dating. She's mine. Don't try to interfere,'" James said in his best impersonation of her boyfriend.

Hermione chuckled. "He has a way with words, doesn't he?"

James snorted.

"Have fun studying. We'll see you for dinner, yes?" Lily said.

"Sounds good. See you guys later."

"Later, Mione."

"Have fun."

"Well, that wasn't so bad," she said after walking back through the portrait. Severus was standing against the wall.

"I told your friends we were dating."

"I heard, thank you."

"What did you tell Black?"

"None of your concern."

He looked at her like she had said something disgusting. "Fine. Don't tell me."

"Don't get upset. You wouldn't want me to share some of our private conversations. Would you?"

"Don't you dare."

"Exactly." Hermione walked off in front of him, leaving him in her dust. He quickly picked up speed and caught up to her. "So, where would you like to go study?"

"Room of Requirement."

"Good choice."

"All right, we've had the entire Order search the grounds and have come up empty. Potter's right: she's not on that magical map either," Mad-Eye Moody grumbled.

"It's been forty-eight hours! What if she's lying dead somewhere!" Ron yelled.

"We have got everyone on this, Ron. We are working on finding her," said Moody.

"Try Malfoy's home!" Ron yelled back.

"We are working on it--we have to dig around for a reason to enter his home and search it, give us another day." Tonks said.

"ANOTHER DAY?" Ron screamed.

"Ron, calm down. It won't do Hermione any good if we start yelling at each other." Harry said. "Professor Dumbledore, is there anyway to get Professor Snape back here?"

"No, Harry. When he is with Voldemort, all communication is cut off," explained Dumbledore.

"Remus is checking with the underground. With his connections, he will hear if someone abducted a young lady. But we have to be patient," Arthur said.

"I'm working on some ancient magic that might help us track her down, but like Arthur said, we have to be patient," Dumbledore explained. "We will start with the raid on Malfoy Manor tomorrow, wait to see if Severus shows back up, and I will continue working on the ancient magic, while Remus checks with his kind. Until then, we will meet back here tomorrow, same time. We will then see if any other clues have come up," Dumbledore said as he finished addressing the Order.

Again, many thanks to Lariope.

Chapter 5

Chapter 5 of 9

Hermione accidentally, on purpose, uses a Time-Turner. What happens when she travels back to the Marauder era? What will become of her future? Travel with her as she embarks on a journey that no one, especially Severus Snape, will forget.

All of Hermione's friends went home for the Holidays, except Severus. Another month had passed, and the year 1976 would be coming to an end in a few days. After classes let out, Severus and Hermione had spent almost every moment together. They would meet each other in the Great Hall every morning and then would spend each day doing something different.

Severus tried teaching Hermione to conquer her fears of flying on a broom, inside the Quidditch Stadium one afternoon. But, after her second fall, she ended up throwing the school broom at him, enchanting it so that it would beat him across the head and knock some sense into him. She *had* told him she was scared of flying, but he hadn't listened. They spent the rest of that evening in the hospital wing. Severus had received several cuts from the broom and some splinters in his face from the handle.

They explored the school grounds and had lurked into unknown territories a few times. He had taken her deep inside the forest and showed her where the unicorns gathered. They spent several hours in silence, watching the gorgeous creatures, and he had to literally drag her away from there to go eat dinner.

Hermione had taken him back inside the Room of Requirement, but this time, she'd requested the room to transfer into her parents' home. She had wanted to show him where she grew up. She told him she was feeling homesick, which she was, but Hermione had ulterior motives as well.

They were now standing inside her bedroom. Severus was looking at some of the pictures she had on top of her dresser, and she was sitting on the bed, waiting for him to come to her.

Severus turned around and looked at her while pointing at a certain picture.

"These were your friends?"

"Yes."

"This kid looks a lot like Potter!"

Her eyes widened. "Ah, yeah... I... I guess he does, how funny. Um... Severus, why don't you come sit next to me?" She had to get him away from that picture before he started asking more questions.

Severus gave her a wicked grin. "I'd rather you sit on me," he said softly. He walked over to her bed and sat on the edge of it. She stood up and straddled him, placing her knees on the bed. She wrapped her arms around his neck and started kissing him softly. She felt him harden beneath her, and her body responded with a freshet of moisture.

This had been the first chance they'd had to be alone, without fear of interruption-- since that time on the hill overlooking the Black Lake. Friends and school usually got in the way. Of course, they had made out plenty of times, until she'd felt like screaming for him, but nothing was going to interrupt them today.

Hermione began grinding herself into his lap and Severus moaned deeply. He pushed her back and grabbed her bottom, stood up and flipped her onto the bed. She scooted herself toward the headboard. When she was comfortable, he slowly crawled over her, dragging his hips over hers. His lips found her neck and he started sucking hard, giving her a love bite. Hermione was fumbling with his buttons, trying to remove his shirt. She slid her fingers over his nipples and gave them a tight squeeze making him hiss with desire.

Then, he sat back onto his knees and took his shirt completely off. Hermione had been wearing her halter top and had untied it. Severus helped her pull the top over her head, revealing a lacy strapless bra. She rolled to the side, and he slowly unhooked it and pulled it off. Severus couldn't take his eyes off her breasts. He leaned over and kissed each one, rolling each nipple lightly between his teeth. Hermione was running her fingers down the black trail of hair that led to the top of his pants. She loved the feeling of its texture across her fingertips and wondered what the rest would feel like against her skin. Severus slid his hands down her sides, giving her chills, and found the top of her pants. Together, they unbuttoned each other, but as Hermione tried to slide his pants over his hips, he stopped her.

"Are you sure?" he asked.

"As long as we have taken precautions."

"I have, I've been taking the potion since I asked you to be my girlfriend."

"Good, keep going, then."

"I can't promise how long I'll last, but I can promise that you will be satisfied, okay?"

"Thank you."

He took her lips again before he pulled her pants and knickers down. Severus was surprised at how well groomed she was, and the sight of her reddening lips made him eager. He ran his fingers lightly over her pussy and inhaled deeply. He wanted to taste her.

Hermione felt suddenly shy. She had never gone this far with anyone else, but when he growled after putting his tongue directly on her clit, her nervousness went out the window. He pushed her legs further apart and started lapping at her slowly. Her folds ran slick with juice, and he took one of his slender fingers and scooped it up and entered her warmth. He kept circling her clit with his tongue and slid another finger in her; this time she squirmed.

"Did that hurt?"

"Oh gods no, keep going. Add another one!" she panted.

Severus pushed a third finger inside of her, this time with more difficulty. Slowly he pumped and licked her. Suddenly, she grabbed his head and pushed his face deeper into her. "Mmm! Oh... so good!"

He pulled his third finger out and pushed the other two as deep as he could go and slammed into her. He flicked his tongue faster as he did this, then he felt it; she clamped down around his fingers and her body started to shake.

"Yes! Yes!" she screamed.

He pulled out of her and scrambled out of his pants. She wrapped her legs around his waist as he found her opening.

"It's going to hurt, so make it fast," she huffed.

His dick was throbbing, and he thrust into her as hard as he could, ripping her hymen. She screamed from the pain and dug her nails into his back. Severus saw the tears forming in the corners of her eyes, but he was too far gone to try to stop. Harder and harder he drove into her until he felt his balls tightening up.

More and more groans from them both.

She had begun grinding her hips into his pelvis, trying to forget about the pain. He was so full inside of her, and the mere thought that she was finally having sex with Severus Snape pushed Hermione into another orgasm.

"Oh!"

"Mione! You feel so good!"

Hermione managed to find her clit with her fingers and started massaging it, so she could cum at the same time as her lover. Tension built between them until Severus was bucking into her mindlessly. Finally, he expelled inside of her, and she hollered, feeling the rush of another satisfying orgasm. He fell limply over her, and his long hair engulfed them in darkness. They were breathing hard as he kissed her lips again.

"I love you, Mione," he said softly.

"I love you more, Severus."

His heart melted. He slowly rolled off of her and pulled the blankets on top of them, where they slept in each others' arms for the rest of the afternoon. After they woke, Hermione went to the bathroom and tried to clean herself up, but Severus followed behind her and they showered together.

They washed each other's hair and Severus lathered them both with the soap. Then, he brought her closer and kissed her until the water had washed away all the bubbles. He even dried her hair with his wand and helped her curl the tips out.

"My mother had long hair, that's why I know so much about how to take care of it. I know I get teased about my own hair, but I don't care about the way I look. Well... only sometimes," he said.

"I like your hair just fine, and I really like it when you do my hair."

Hermione wasn't surprised that she found some of her old clothes in the closet; the room had amazing magic, and she decided to take what was there, packing it away in a small bag. Then, after looking at her photos one last time, they left the Room of Requirement and went down to dinner.

Since James and Sirius were gone, they took a trip to Hogsmeade on the last weekend before the students came back from holiday, where they bought each other belated Christmas gifts.

Severus had bought Hermione an antique silver headband that had small diamonds and pearls interwoven together. He had also purchased her some nail polish that changed colors depending on the type of mood she was in. Hermione couldn't believe how extravagant the headband was, however, Severus assured her that he had been saving his money, not really needing anything himself, and that it was his honor to buy something so beautiful for her.

Hermione had bought Severus a new book bag, his old one was in tatters, and a pewter stirring stick for his potion making. Although it took most of her money, she knew that with good care, pewter sticks could last a lifetime. She'd even had his name inscribed on it. It wasn't until he had unwrapped it and told her that he would cherish it forever, that Hermione realized he wasn't kidding.

"This is a special potion that we are going to be making, Miss Granger. It requires the best of the best in equipment--not the basics that you are used to using in class. I will provide everything that is needed, but I must impress upon you how valuable and priceless some of my personal collection is."

"Yes, sir. I will be very careful with anything you allow me to borrow."

"I know. That's another reason I chose you to assist me."

Snape pulled off a white sheet that had been covering the lab table.

"As you can see, we are going to use a gold cauldron; it will help keep the potion from overheating. These glass bottles are hand blown; they are very delicate, yet will hold the hottest liquid without cracking." He walked down the table and continue showing her the different items.

"And this," he said while picking up a long stirring stick, "is my most prized possession." He looked directly into her eyes. "Someone very special gave this to me years ago. Pewter stirring sticks can last a lifetime if they are well cared for. I trust you will handle this with the utmost care." He handed her the stick, and she ran her fingers along the inscription: Severus Snape.

"Yes, sir, you can count on me to take care of this." She placed it back on the lab table and looked up at him. He was smiling.

At the time, Hermione thought it was strange that he had been smiling, actually grinning from ear to ear. But now, she understood. She had given him the stirring stick and he'd held onto it, keeping it near and dear to his heart. She suddenly felt like a frog was in her throat.

He was hinting to me, all along. I'm not sure when I go back to the future, but he, apparently, has always loved me. That's why he was smiling. He must have known I would be going back to the past and that I would end up buying this for him. He was trying to share this with me, so hopefully there will be a chance for us when I go back to the future!

After Christmas, Hermione was floating high. She knew Severus of the past loved her, but knowing that Severus of the future had always loved her, made her amazingly happy.

Unfortunately, this didn't last long because she started to feel torn. She wanted to go home and be with his older self, but she wanted to stay in the past, too. She decided that once her friends returned for the new term, it was time for her to start warning them about their futures; she didn't belong in the past, no matter how badly she wanted to stay with the young Severus.

"Okay, we searched Malfoy Manor. Remus came along and didn't smell her scent anywhere in the house; she hasn't been there." Arthur said.

"Well, it's now been seventy-two hours. Have you heard anything from the underground?" Harry asked Lupin.

"Nothing, all is quiet actually."

"I'm still working on that ancient magic, probably another day or two until it's ready. This could be a good sign, though. If Voldemort had taken her, I have a feeling that we would have known about it by now--however, we still need to be prepared for the worst," Dumbledore said.

"So this is all we can do? Wait to see if Snape shows back up? Or wait on this ancient magic that you're trying to create?" Ron asked.

"I'm afraid so." Dumbledore said.

Chapter 6

Chapter 6 of 9

Hermione accidentally, on purpose, uses a Time-Turner. What happens when she travels back to the Marauder era? What will become of her future? Travel with her as she embarks on a journey that no one, especially Severus Snape, will forget.

The new year rolled around, and everyone was very busy with their studies. Severus and Hermione spent the evenings together eating dinner and then doing homework. She spent the days with Lily and the boys. One afternoon, Hermione and Remus were in the courtyard, studying on a bench, when something strange happened.

"Mione, what do you plan on doing after you leave Hogwarts?"

"I'm not really sure; what about you?"

"Well, there is plenty I want to do, but I don't think I will be able to."

She knew why, but here was her chance to warn him about his future. "Hmm. Well, if it's any consolation, you will make an excellent Defense Against the Dark Arts teacher."

Hermione felt suddenly sick. Her surroundings swirled past her. "REMUS?!" she tried to scream, but nothing came out of her mouth. She looked over to him; he was still looking down at his book and was turning his page very slowly. Then the spinning stopped. She was still sitting; nothing seemed different.

"So, what do you think?" he asked her.

"Um, I'm sorry, Remus, what were you saying?"

He looked up at her. "You okay? You looked flushed."

"Yes. I think I'm overdoing the studying."

"Oh. I said maybe I should continue my education at a Muggle University."

"Oh, that would be a good idea. I was thinking about doing that myself, but I'm not really sure yet. Remus, if you don't mind, I'm going to go lie down. I suddenly don't feel so good."

"All right, I'll walk up to the room with you. You really don't look well; maybe we should go see Madam Pomfrey."

"No, I just want to lie down right now. Oh, thanks." He had picked up her bag and was carrying it for her as they walked back inside the castle.

What the hell was that all about? She was lying on her bed looking up at the canopy. *He was moving slowly, but I felt like I was moving at lightning speed.* She reached inside her shirt and pulled out the gold chain that was hanging from her neck, looking at the small hour glass. She tried moving it forward, then backward, and nothing happened. *I obviously went forward in time, but how and why?*

"Hey, Mione. You okay? Remus told me you didn't look so good earlier," Lily said. She sat next to Hermione in the chair next to her bed.

"Yeah, I think I just got a taste of over-studying. Um, Lily, what do you plan on doing once you leave Hogwarts?"

"Oh. Well, honestly, James and I have been approached by the Ministry; we are going to be Unspeakables."

"And a year after you marry, you're going to have a son," Hermione said. Again, the room started spinning. Lily looked like she was frozen, except for her lips; they were

moving very slowly. STOP!

This time when the spinning stopped, Hermione was very sick. She flung herself over her bed, on the opposite side of Lily, and threw up.

"MIONE!" Lily jumped from her chair and started vanishing Hermione's mess. She conjured a towel and handed it to her. Hermione took it and wiped her face.

"I think we need to take you to Madam Pomfrey--come on, get up."

"I'm fine."

"No, you're not, and it's my responsibility as Head Girl to make sure my housemates stay healthy."

Lily held out a hand and helped Hermione out of the bed. They walked silently to the hospital wing, Hermione frantically thinking of how she was going to explain her 'sickness.' Madam Pomfrey made her lie on the bed and take some potion to help calm her nerves and ushered Lily out of the back to Gryffindor Tower.

"I just had an upset stomach, that's all."

"Well, I can't find anything wrong with you, so just relax for a little longer and let the potion take effect," Madam Pomfrey said after performing a few diagnostic spells over Hermione's body.

As soon as she left Hermione's bedside, the doors to the hospital wing burst opened, and Severus came running in.

"Mione! Lily said you were up here; what's wrong?"

"Nothing, just a stomach ache."

"She'll be okay with some rest," Madam Pomfrey said from across the room.

"I'm fine, really, Severus."

"I'm staying here with you. Do you want anything?"

"Just to be able to close my eyes."

Severus pulled a chair up to the bed and, holding her hand, watched her fall asleep.

When she woke, she was surprised to see Severus still next to her in the chair. He had curled up in a small ball and laid his robe over him to keep warm. Madam Pomfrey never let visitors stay overnight when Hermione knew her in the future, but clearly, she had a soft spot for Severus. He must have heard her moving around, because he started stirring in the chair.

She loved the way his hair had draped over his face; to her he looked like a sleeping dark angel. "Morning, my love," she said quietly.

"Mmm. I could get used to waking up with you. Are you ready to leave?"

She grinned. "Yes."

He stood up. "I'll go and let Madam Pomfrey know; she'll want to do another check up on you before you leave."

After leaving the hospital wing, Severus walked her back up to the seventh floor. "I'm going to go shower; I'll see you in class later today."

"Thank you for staying with me all night."

"My pleasure. I wasn't going to leave you; I never will. You do know that I will always be here for you, right?"

"Yes, Severus, I know. I love you." She gave him a kiss on the cheek and started to walk off.

"It's January ninth," he said before she got too far.

She turned around. "Yes, it is."

"Today is my eighteenth birthday."

"Severus!" She ran over to him. "I didn't know! Happy birthday!" She started peppering his face with small kisses.

"What would you like to do tonight? We have classes all day, but let's do something special...anything you want! Just tell me."

"Anything?"

She saw his little smirk. "Within reason."

He leaned over and whispered something in her ear. "Okay," she said.

"Yes?" he asked, looking surprised.

"Yes, meet me at the boathouse before dinner."

She walked into her dorm and down to the bathrooms and started getting ready for the day.

Okay, think, Hermione. Each time you got sick, you were attempting to tell the person something about their future, but they didn't hear you. Instead, you sped up in time. The second time, when you really tried to focus on stopping it, you could. So what does this mean? Err. You have to test this again, but not tonight. Tonight is all about Severus.

"Did you hear the news?" James asked her when she walked into the Greenhouse.

"No, what news?"

"Apparition testing will start at the end of the month. A few classes, and we can get our license! As long as you are of age."

"Oh, wonderful. I'll be sure to sign up." *Shite. I already have my license.*

"See, last year, they changed the dates, so we all missed the cutoff. So, we are pretty excited," James explained.

"Did you tell her?" Sirius said, coming up from behind her.

"Yeah, she knows; she's going to sign up with us," James said.

"Brilliant. Now if we could only get our other license." Sirius winked at him.

"No, that wouldn't be a good idea." Hermione blurted out. She knew if Sirius were a registered Animagus, he would never be able to break out of Azkaban in later years.

James and Sirius just stared at her. Hermione froze, hoping they hadn't heard her.

"Come again?"

"Hmm?" she said, trying to look disinterested.

"What wouldn't be a good idea?"

"Oh, look. We are going to be planting in the garden today," she said, changing the subject.

Sirius walked over to where Remus was standing with Lily and grabbed him while James guided Hermione out of the Greenhouse.

"Come on, we need to talk," James said.

SHITE! SHITE! SHITE! You're such a blabbermouth!

"What's going on?" Remus asked. They were in a corner on the outside of the greenhouse. Sirius cast a silencing spell around them.

"I think our little secret is known to a certain transfer student," James told Remus.

"Mione, explain," Sirius demanded.

"Alright! I know and have for a long time. I swear, I haven't told anyone!"

"How did you find out? And how much do you know?"

She took a deep breath and pointed from Remus to Sirius and then James. "Werewolf, dog, stag, and the other one is a rat."

"OH, BLOODY HELL!"

"How?"

"I'm not stupid. I noticed when you were getting sick, Remus. And the rest, I saw you one night," she said.

"We have to be more careful!" James said.

"Look, just to warn you; Snape knows about Remus' furry problem, but he doesn't know about the rest of us," Sirius said.

"I promise, your secret is safe."

"So, what did you mean it wouldn't be a good idea to get our license for it?" James asked.

"Oh, something like being able to change into an animal any time you want...well, I would keep that a secret. Not many people can do that, you know, so the Ministry would have strong tabs on you."

"Here comes the professor. We have your word?" James said quickly.

"Yes, James, you do. No worries."

"Thanks."

Okay, so why was I able to speak freely about this and not go forward in time? What was the difference? Ahh... because I wasn't trying to tell them something about their future...they are Animagi now, in the past!

Hermione made it to the boathouse first. She had packed a light dinner for them and was waiting in the boat when Severus came around the corner.

"Sorry, I'm late. Our etiquette class with Lucius Malfoy ran late."

"Malfoy," she snarled out of the side of her mouth.

"Did you say something?" he asked her while getting in the boat.

"Nope. Take us back to that lovely spot, would you?" she asked him.

With a lurch of the boat, they were off. It was still very cold out, so Hermione placed a warming charm around the boat. When they'd reached the shore, she slipped a few times while walking up the hill, but Severus never let her fall completely. When they reached the top, she melted the snow, laid down the blanket and put a warming charm around their area.

"Hungry?" she said while opening the basket.

"Yes, but not for food." He leaned over her body and pushed her backwards onto the blanket, slowly sliding his hand up her shirt.

"Mmm, Severus, it's been a while."

"Yes, too long, actually."

He nibbled on her neck and pulled her skirt up.

"Hey, I thought it was your birthday! Roll over."

Severus grinned and lay down on the blanket. He put his arms behind his head as Hermione straddled his legs and started unbuttoning his trousers. She slipped his pants and under shorts over his hips, revealing his hardened cock. Pre cum was already forming on his tip, and Hermione gently licked it up. She grasped his balls and circled her tongue around his shaft, making him moan with pleasure. Then she went for it. She opened her mouth wide and let it slide to the back of her throat. She made sure her lips were over her teeth so that she didn't scrape him, and started bobbing up and down.

"OH, YES, MIONE!"

Her other hand grasped his dick and moved in motion with her mouth. Then she let her hand massage him while she suckled on his balls. He wrapped his fingers in her hair and pushed his hips into her. She returned her mouth to his cock, moving faster and faster up and down his length.

"Stop, stop!" He pulled her off his shaft.

"What's wrong?"

"Let me inside of you; I'm going to cum. Hurry up, woman! Sit on me!"

Hermione quickly pushed her knickers down and lowered herself onto him. He found her clit and started circling it hard and fast. She rocked forward with her hips and placed her hands on his shoulders.

"Mmm, Severus!"

"Oh yes! I love the way you feel around me!" He screamed as they rocked with each other. "I CAN'T HOLD OFF... OH, GODS!" He erupted inside of her, but kept moving his fingers, bringing Hermione along with him.

She panted harder and ground into him one last time and then let her own ecstasy take over her body.

"How did you like your birthday gift?" she asked, rolling off of him and snuggling next to him after her sexual high had slowed down.

"Wonderful. I didn't gag you?"

"Yes, but I don't care; I enjoy making you feel good."

"Thank you. This has been the best birthday ever."

"Good. Are you hungry now?" She giggled.

"Yes, feed me."

Hermione was nervous about doing the Apparation classes. She already knew how to Apparate, and there was no way to fake not knowing how without Splinching yourself. The classes were in the same format as the one she'd had in the future, and on the first attempt, she Apparated perfectly into her circle; her friends bombarded her with questions after class. Then, she was called to the Headmaster's office that day.

"Miss Jean, I asked you here because it seems you already know how to Apparate; I wasn't aware that the French taught this at a younger age than we do?"

"Yes, well, I think I may have been an exception."

"Clearly," Dumbledore said from across his desk. "You are quite the witch. From what I understand, you figured out a secret about one of our students."

"Simple deduction, sir."

"Apparently. Well, we can do this one of two ways; you can continue your Apparation classes with your friends, or I can hand you a license right now."

"I'll take the license. I don't think people will be able to concentrate with me around."

"Good idea. Anything else on your mind?" He looked at her over his glasses. She knew how he worked.

"Not at this time, sir," she said, avoiding his gaze.

"Very well. Back to class with you. And I do trust you will... keep things to yourself?"

"Absolutely."

"Gather around. The magic is ready," Dumbledore said to the people in his office. He walked over to a large, clear glass bowl, and the others lined up next to it.

"The reason it has taken four days to prepare is because I have had to cast spells and enchantments across the entire grounds as well as surrounding areas such as Hogsmeade. It was a long and difficult process, but it will help locate her aura."

"Her aura, sir?" Harry asked.

"Yes. This magic will let us know if she is indeed on the grounds or outlying areas. If not, then we will not waste anymore time looking for her here."

"But according to the map, she isn't here," Harry said.

"Yes, Remus showed me the map, and as wonderful as it is, it doesn't show everywhere, including the surrounding areas," Dumbledore explained.

Dumbledore started chanting in ancient Latin, moving his wand over the glass bowl. Fog started swishing in the bowl, and then it disappeared, revealing an aerial view of Hogwarts: the forests, the lake and the areas all the way down to the small town. He started chanting again, and a pale purple, foggy substance started flowing over a small hill that was across the castle and lake. Dumbledore was quiet.

"Is that her?" Lupin asked.

"I'm... not sure," Dumbledore said.

"Oh, great, she's lying dead on some hill! We never checked there!" Ron exclaimed.

"No, she isn't dead. Watch." Dumbledore did another chant, and the purple fog disappeared. A pure white fog seeped from a window in the Great Hall. "That aura is Nearly Headless Nick--see how his is pure white? That indicates a soul that has passed on. But--" Dumbledore started chanting again, and this time a solid yellow came out of a tower. "This is my own aura; you can see how solid the color is; it's not pale and foggy like Hermione's, which is in between being solid and ghostly white."

"So, she must be on that hill dying as we speak!" Harry shouted.

Before anyone could answer, a silky deep voice came from behind them. "She isn't dying."

Everyone turned around. "Severus!" shouted Professor McGonagall.

They rushed over to the hurt man. His lip was split open, and he was bleeding through gashes in his robes.

"GET POPPY!" McGonagall yelled at Remus.

Arthur and Mad-Eye helped him into a chair.

"Severus, what happened?" Dumbledore asked.

"I was summoned. He punished me for not being able to give him more information. Then, we attacked different Muggles. When I refused to participate in their disgusting games, I was beaten."

"I thought he didn't make you... rape and torture others," Dumbledore said quietly.

Molly and Tonks gasped.

"I've never had to. I've been lucky to get around it. But this time, he said that I have not been acting like a loyal servant and as my punishment I was to partake in the activities. But, thankfully, I was able to get out of it again," he said quickly.

"How?" growled Moody.

"I'm sorry, Headmaster--" Snape began.

"Severus, what did you have to promise him?" Dumbledore asked.

"That I would deliver Potter by the end of the week."

"WHAT?" yelled Harry.

The room was suddenly noisy with everyone's opinion.

"Silence!" Dumbledore said loudly.

Harry was fuming.

"Look, we knew you were going to have to face him sooner or later, Harry. This is actually a good thing. If Severus is the one to take you in front of him, we will be the ones in control. We will create a plan. Remember, Harry, Voldemort doesn't know that Severus is on our side."

"Fine," Harry said angrily, though it was clear that he did not think it was fine.

"Oh, Severus! You poor boy!" Madam Pomfrey said as she came out of the Floo. She held several bottles of healing potion and started pouring them down his throat.

"Thank you, Poppy."

"You had me worried this time, young man! You've been gone for four days!"

"Speaking of being gone for four days, what were you saying about Hermione?" Remus asked.

All eyes turned to Severus.

"She isn't dead."

There was silence throughout the room.

"She's here at Hogwarts. Twenty years into the past."

"Excuse me--"

"WHAT?"

"Merlin's Beard!"

"Explain yourself, Severus," Dumbledore said sternly.

"It's a long story, but basically, she has a Time-Turner and went back to the past." He looked at Remus. "Do you remember a Mione Jean in our seventh year?"

Lupin's face absorbed what Snape was saying. "No... It couldn't be..."

"Yes. Mione is Hermione."

"I should have known! I always thought she looked familiar to me!" Lupin put his hands to his forehead.

"What's going on?" Harry shouted.

"I thought something was suspicious about Mione Jean," Dumbledore said.

"Hermione's at school with my parents?" Harry said.

"Yes, Potter. She was there for seven months. I have no idea when she will be retuning to the future."

"How do you even know she returns?" Harry yelled.

"I JUST DO!" Severus screamed back.

"Severus, Harry, please calm down. We will discuss this later; right now we need to worry about the war, and when Miss Granger returns, we will make sure she is healthy and safe--we will get into questions later!" Dumbledore said.

After the meeting, Snape followed Madam Pomfrey to the hospital wing.

"So, this explains quite a bit," she said as he lay down on the bed.

"Please, Poppy, not now."

"Don't 'not now' me, young man; I've always been on your side, and I want an explanation."

"Fine. Obviously, I didn't know who she was back then."

"And when she disappeared?"

"You were there. Everyone searched for her. She disappeared right in front of me; I had no idea what had happened."

"Oh, Severus, dear."

"I'm sorry, Poppy. I would like to explain more, but I'm very tired and sore."

"I understand. Get some sleep. We will speak more about this later."

"What are you doing hanging around here like a stray puppy, Snivellus?" Sirius said. He had just left the portrait hole when he saw the taller boy sitting on the floor across from the entrance to Gryffindor common room.

"I'm waiting for my girlfriend, Black. Bigger off."

Sirius walked over to him and looked down at Snape. "Why don't you give her some room to breathe instead of hovering around her all of the time?"

Snape jumped to his feet; they were now nose to nose.

"Why don't you mind your own business, Black, before you find yourself crying out in pain?"

"You're the one who is going to get hurt! She's just with you out of pity!"

Snape reached for his wand at the same time that Sirius reached for his.

"STOP IT!" Hermione yelled from the portrait hole.

"Stop it! Sirius, Severus lower your wands! Now, what's the problem?"

"Nothing," they both said.

"Sirius, James is looking for you. Severus, let's go."

Hermione tugged on Severus' wand arm and pulled him toward the stairs.

"I thought you two were going to stop fighting--for my sake?"

"I never said that." He smirked.

Hermione quickly changed the subject, not wanting to put Severus in a bad mood. "They're having a weekend at Hogsmeade for Valentine's Day. I know you don't want to go, so we should think of something else to do," she said.

"We'll go. If that's what you want."

"But, what about Sirius and James?"

"I'm not going to hide from them anymore. I want to take my girlfriend out and show her off. So, we'll go."

She squeezed his waist. "Oh, Severus! Thank you."

It wasn't Sirius or James that was the problem during their trip to Hogsmeade. In fact, with Lily around, the boys were actually somewhat decent to Severus. Although he despised hanging out with them, he did it for Mione's sake. No, it was another person who made an appearance in Hogsmeade that caused a ruckus.

Severus and Hermione had joined her friends in the Three Broomsticks when Lucius Malfoy walked through the door. Hermione had spotted him waltzing in, and her hatred blinded her.

Ignoring her surroundings, Hermione had fixed her gaze on the handsome man who was walking over to their table.

"Severus. Associating with Gryffindors?" Lucius whispered to Snape.

"I'll be right back," Severus said to Hermione.

She watched as her boyfriend followed the suave young man outside.

"James, I know you have your cloak--can I borrow it?" Hermione whispered.

"Sure, what's up?" He pulled his cloak out of a small bag that Lily was carrying.

"I don't trust Malfoy."

"No need to say anything else." He handed her the cloak, and Hermione slipped underneath it and walked out of the pub.

"Your girlfriend?" she heard Lucius say as she walked over to the side of the building.

"Yes."

"Is she a pure-blood?"

"I don't think so."

"Hmmm. As long as she isn't a Mudblood. Look, the reason I brought you out here is to tell you that next month we are going to have a meeting. Are you in or out?"

"I don't know, Lucius. Now, that I'm with Mione, I--"

"You're going to let her sway your mind? Do you think I let Narcissa influence mine? You're the man! Put your foot down. If you want to join us, then do so. Having a girlfriend won't affect anything."

Hermione didn't need to hear anymore. *Don't you try to get him to join you and Voldemort, you bastard!*

A flash of red light shot out of her wand, and Lucius toppled over, but wasn't completely stunned. She hadn't been practicing her non-verbal magic and was rusty.

"WHAT THE HELL?" Severus yelled, spinning around looking for the source of the spell.

Hermione jumped on Lucius and started hitting him. Severus watched in confusion as an unknown entity beat his friend. Lucius was able to push her off of him, making her stumble backwards; the cloak slipped off her.

"MIONE! What are you doing?" Snape yelled.

"LEAVE HIM ALONE, YOU RICH BASTARD!"

"MIONE!" Severus was struggling with her as she tried swinging her arms and legs to hit Lucius again. He slipped his hand over her mouth and muffled her shouting.

"Like I said, you're the man--deal with her." Lucius wiped the blood from his lip and glared at Hermione, then walked off.

"ARE YOU GOING TO CALM DOWN?" Severus shouted.

She was breathing hard, anger flaring, but she nodded and stopped struggling. He grabbed her shoulders and whipped her around to face him.

"What the hell were you thinking?"

"Don't listen to him, Severus! Please!" she said, tears starting to swell in her eyes.

"Why not?" he said, shaking her roughly.

Suddenly, they heard a voice from behind where they were standing.

"Impedimenta!"

Severus was pushed away from Hermione, and the force of the spell knocked her to the ground.

"JAMES, STOP!" Hermione yelled as she saw her friend pointing his wand directly at Severus.

Lily and Remus rushed over to Hermione and helped her up.

"We heard screaming--what's happening?" Sirius said.

"Ask Mione! She's the one attacking Lucius Malfoy!" Severus yelled from the ground.

"What! Why?" Lily said.

Tears were falling from her eyes now. "Because he's an evil person!"

"You don't even know him, Mione!" Severus yelled.

"YES, I DO! PLEASE, SEVERUS--STAY AWAY FROM HIM!"

"GIVE ME A REASON!"

"I... I... can't!" She freed herself from Lily's arms and started running off, back toward the school, wiping the tears from her face.

"I'll go after her," Lily said.

"No. She's my girlfriend. I'll go," Severus said, standing to his feet.

"Why don't you let her be by herself for a while, until she calms down?" Remus suggested.

"No, I don't want her to think I won't chase after her, *because I will*." Severus started going toward the same direction Hermione had headed. He followed her footprints in the snow, but by the time he reached the castle, she was nowhere in sight.

He decided to sit by the Fat Lady and either wait for her to come out of the portrait hole or go inside, but James, Sirius, Lily, Remus and Peter showed up first.

"Is she in there?" Remus asked Severus.

"I'm not a bloody Gryffindor. How am I supposed to know?" he said curtly.

"I'll go check," offered Lily.

A few minutes later, she came back through the hole, holding a large piece of parchment.

"She's not there. So, I got this. James, I hope you don't mind." She handed him the folded parchment.

"Good idea," James said.

"What's a good idea?" Severus asked.

James turned away from Severus and cast a silencing charm. "I solemnly swear that I'm up to no good," he said. He frantically searched the map for her, and after going over it three times, he muttered, "Mischief Managed." He closed the map and turned around, removing the charm.

"Well?" Sirius asked.

"What was that?" Severus said.

"Don't worry about. She's not on here. I've looked three times."

"What do you mean she's not on it?" Remus said.

"Look for yourself--she's not on it!"

"Look, tell me what's going on!" Severus demanded.

"We have a way of knowing where people are around the castle--that's all I will tell you. And apparently Mione isn't even here. Are you sure she came back?"

"YES! I followed her footprints in the snow. They led right up to the castle!"

"Well, unless she's in some secret room, we can't find her! Maybe we should go back down to Hogsmeade."

Something clicked in Severus' mind. Suddenly, he ran along the corridor, leaving the others with dumbfounded expressions on their faces, and found the tapestry of Barnabas the Barmy trying to teach trolls to dance the ballet. He pictured Hermione's home and walked up and down the corridor three times. Then a door slowly appeared, and he quickly went inside.

He heard her sobs coming from above him and ran up the stairs to her bedroom. She was thrown across her bed, head buried in her pillows. He silently walked to her and placed a hand on her back. "Mione," he said in a soft whisper.

She was startled and screamed.

"It's okay... shhh." He wrapped his arms around her and held her tight. "What's going on with you? Tell me."

"I can't. I just don't like him. He's going to get you in trouble."

"Mione, that's the first time you ever met him; how do you know this?"

She wiped her face and looked up into his black eyes. "Gut feeling. Please believe me."

"Okay, okay. I'll try to stay away from him. But he is the teacher for the Slytherins' etiquette class."

"I know, but just don't trust him." She knew that no matter what she said about Lucius, he was still going to end up joining them unless she found another way to stop him.

"Okay." He lifted her chin up and brought his lips to hers, then wiped away her tears.

"Your friends are worried about you; I think we need to go."

"Not yet. I need you, Severus. I need to feel you inside of me." She felt so helpless, seeing Severus' path to the Death Eaters but being unable to say anything to stop it. The only thing that could calm her now would be to feel him, still whole and unsullied, pressed against her.

"Are you sure? You've been upset--"

She kissed him passionately, taking his breath away.

"Please, Severus, touch me. Make me feel good," she moaned into his ear.

He snatched her hair and tipped her neck back and licked her from her collarbone to under her earlobe. "Is this what you wanted?" he breathed into her ear.

"Yes! Take me!"

He rolled her over onto her stomach and lay down across her back, still nuzzling her neck. He slid his hand under her skirt and pushed her stockings down, finding her warmth. She was slick already, and he slid a finger inside of her, making her moan beneath him.

"Mmm... I like that!"

Severus pulled his wet finger out of her and shoved her tights off her legs, spreading her thighs wide. He pulled his hard cock out of his pants, hiked her skirt up over her bottom, and teased her opening with his tip. She carefully raised herself on her knees and pushed back into him. He sank himself into her quim, gripped her hips and drove deeply into her.

"Ahhh!" she groaned. The different position pushed him deeper into her than ever before, hitting a nerve that drove her to buck madly underneath him.

She needed him. She wanted him. She wanted to be one with her lover. The fierce connection she had with him nearly propelled her into her own moment of ecstasy.

She yanked up her shirt and bra, letting her breasts hang free. Severus reached around and grabbed hold of them and started gripping them while he pumped fiercely to her.

"Mione! Mione!" he chanted. The deepness inside of her consumed Severus, and he hurtled over the edge into a breathtaking orgasm.

"OH, PROFESSOR!" Hermione screamed as she peaked.

Severus fell onto her back, panting and still inside of her. Her own knees collapsed from his weight and her loss of strength.

"Pro... professor?" he said after exhaling deeply.

"What?" she said breathlessly.

"You said, oh, Professor!"

"Did I? Sorry." *Way to go!*

"You aren't dreaming of anyone else, are you?"

"No. I just... had this strange image of you taking me like you just did over a lab table in the Potions classroom."

"Really? Sounds interesting--"

"I'm having a hard time breathing--" she said, trying to ignore what she had so stupidly said aloud.

"Oh, sorry," he said, rolling off of her and onto his own back. He wasn't too satisfied by her story, but he pulled her into his arms anyway, where they held each other for a while.

"What's the plan?" Harry asked. He was standing in Dumbledore's office along with the rest of the Order and Aurors.

"Well, it's not quite the end of the week. If I can take you into his service earlier, all the better. I want this done and over with before Miss Granger returns."

"Are you going to explain more about that situation or not?" Ron asked Snape.

"I'll explain everything when she returns--until then, stop asking me about it, Mr. Weasley."

"Settle down. Harry, you and Severus are going to go before Voldemort. I'm going to give you my wand--use it against him. He will be expecting Priori Incantatem. You are going to have to use the Killing Curse, Harry. I'm sorry, but we have no other way," Dumbledore explained.

"Yes, sir, but I didn't think I was powerful enough for that."

"You're not. That's why I spent my entire summer coming up with a potion that will help you cast an Unforgivable Curse while keeping your soul intact. It won't do all the work for you; you will still need to reach deep down in yourself to find the hatred you have for him, and just kill him!" Severus lectured.

"Severus... I trust Harry; he can do this. We will put a locating charm on you, Harry, and we will be right behind you the entire time," Dumbledore said.

"Yes, sir. A potion? Is that why Hermione helped you all summer?"

"Yes, we both created it."

"She really is a brilliant witch."

"Indeed."

"So, when should we do this?"

"Tomorrow," Severus said.

"Well, it's official! We are all able to Apparate!" Lily said as she entered the common room. The end of March was here, and spring break was approaching soon. Hermione and Severus hadn't brought up the event in Hogsmeade again, and they continued with their usual routine of meeting each other at night to eat dinner and study. When her friends were at Apparition class, Hermione would use that time for more intimate moments with Severus.

"Oh, good!" Hermione said, rising from her cozy chair. "Where are the boys?"

"They are going to grab a snack, then go out to the Quidditch Pitch. Where's Severus?"

"Oh, it's one of those nights for the Slytherin guys."

"Ah."

"Hey, Lily, I need to ask you something," Hermione said, walking over to the table where Lily was sitting.

"Sure."

"I wanted to ask you about Peter."

"Oh?"

"Yeah. Um... Why do you guys like him?"

Lily chuckled. "Well, he's harmless. He follows the boys around; I guess they took pity on him. You know how they like to have an audience. I did notice that you don't like him too much."

"No, I don't. Do you trust him?"

"Yeah. Why?"

"Well, I just get the feeling that he isn't trustworthy. I wanted to tell you that, just in case... sometime in the future--"

She started swirling around again. STOP!

"Hello? Why?" Hermione heard Lily saying as the spinning stopped. She didn't notice that anything happened.

"Umm... I don't know--just a feeling, I guess."

"Oh. Well, just give him a chance. So, do you want to go down to the pitch and watch them?"

"Yes, let's go."

So, it's true; the minute I intentionally try to tell them about their future, I speed up in time... What's going on? It's like this Time-Turner won't let me speak the truth. I wonder how far I could go into the future if I kept talking.

Hermione turned the corner to walk out to the stadium and ran into a wall.

"Severus! I thought you had your class tonight!"

"I did; it's over. Join me for the evening," he said shortly.

"It's okay, Mione; I'll meet up with you later!" Lily said as she continued to walk.

"Where are we going? What's wrong?" she asked him.

"I'm working on an extra credit project, and I could use your assistance."

"Really? On what?"

"You'll see when we get to the lab."

They walked down to the potions lab, and Severus started gathering supplies while Hermione sat on the stool and watched. He brought over some long plant stems and a small knife and sat them on the table in front of her.

"Make yourself useful, my love. I need these finely sliced."

She picked up the knife and started splitting the stems down the center. She made her first slice and was anxious; she hadn't worked side by side him with potions since that summer after her sixth year.

"Chop the roots finely. Slow down. Here, let me show you!" He was being his usual strict self, something she was used to. He placed his hand over hers and guided her on how to properly cut the roots the way he wanted.

Hermione was extremely nervous; he never touched her, or anyone else, when teaching. She hoped he hadn't noticed her shaking hands, but he had. He quickly pulled

away from her and handed her the knife.

"Well, that's how you do it."

"Yes, sir." She could tell he was tense. She wondered why; he was the secretive spy; what could she ever do to make him nervous?

"How's this, Professor?" She showed him the newly chopped roots.

He quickly glanced at them, "Much better."

"How does this look, Severus?" She showed him the sliced stems.

"Perfect. Just like you."

She grinned. "Anything else?"

"Yes." He handed her more plants and gave her similar instructions.

"So, what are you making?"

"It's a derivative of a healing potion. I'm taking the properties and mixing them with a new magical herb. If my calculations are correct, the potion will be much stronger and help heal internal wounds quicker."

"Wow, Severus! I'm impressed."

He grinned at her.

"No wonder you're the best Potions master and third most powerful wizard in the world," she muttered under her breath. "So, this is for Madam Pomfrey?" she asked.

Potions master? Third most powerful wizard? What in the world is she talking about?

"It's for her, isn't it, Severus?" she asked again.

"Yes. If it works, she'll be able to give me recommendations on my transcripts. Since she isn't officially a teacher, I would need to do something pretty big for her to be able to do that, so this is what I came up with. The Ministry approved it, so here we are. I wanted your help because it is going to take all night, and I don't like being away from you more than I have to, so you're spending it here with me."

"Thanks for asking."

He stopped pulling his equipment out and faced her. "I'm sorry, Mione. Would you please--"

"Of course, silly! I love being with you." She giggled.

The potion took hours for him to complete. It was well after curfew before they snuck back off to bed.

The next day, Hermione went with Severus to turn his potion in to Madam Pomfrey, who happily handed him a general letter of recommendation.

After several minutes of talking with the matron, they walked up to the Astronomy Tower. They had had a long night and wanted to sit back and relax before they had to go to their separate afternoon classes.

Hermione decided to try her Time-Turner again. "So, what are you going to do after leaving Hogwarts?" she asked him.

They were sitting on a bench looking over the grounds. Then, he put his arm around her.

"That depends."

"On what?" she asked.

"You," he said plainly.

She turned to him, "Me?"

"Yes."

"What do you mean?"

"Well, I've been asked to do several things, but I will only do the one that coincides with whatever you are going to do. Like I said before, I don't like being away from you for too long; especially if you become my wife."

He finally looked her in the eyes.

"Your wife? Really?"

"I know it may be too soon, but honestly, we are made for each other, and I don't ever want to take another lover. You're the best thing that has ever happened to me, and I love you, so yes... I want you as my wife." He reached down into his pocket and pulled out a ring. "Marry me, Mione. Be mine forever."

Hermione was stunned. She couldn't breathe; she wasn't expecting this. All she could do was jump into his arms and kiss him with all her might.

"Well?" he said after she released his lips.

"Yes! Of course! Oh, Severus... I love you so much!"

Smiling, he pulled her left hand into his lap and slipped the ring onto her finger.

"This is another antique. It's platinum, and the Latin inscription is a special enchantment that will help protect you and keep you safe. This is a princess cut with a pink diamond--"

"Severus... how did you afford this?"

"It was my surrogate mother's grandmother's ring."

"Your surrogate mother? Madam Pomfrey?" Hermione said surprised.

"Yes. She looks after me like a son, as she never had any children. My family and I... Well, she's more my family than any blood relatives. Anyway, she knew that I wanted to marry you, so she let me have this."

"Oh, Severus! It's beautiful!"

"You're beautiful. You've made me very happy. I can't wait to tell her."

"Me neither. So, now that you know I want to be your wife, what do you plan on doing after Hogwarts?"

"No clue. I just said that to set up my proposal." He chuckled.

She punched him in the arm.

After dinner that night, Severus took Hermione up to the hospital wing.

"What happened this time, dear?" Madam Pomfrey said when she saw Severus walking into the room.

"Nothing. She said yes," Severus said, motioning toward Hermione.

Madam Pomfrey stopped what she was doing and froze. "Really?"

Severus smiled and lifted Hermione's left hand, showing off the ring.

"Oh! My sweet boy! Mione, dear, you have made him so happy!" Madam Pomfrey rushed over to the two of them and locked them both in a deep hug. "Let me see the ring again! He told you it was my grandmother's?"

"Yes, and thank you so much. I love it!"

"Well, it's a bit loose, but Severus can take you down to the jeweler and have it sized to fit you perfectly--won't you, dear?"

"Yes, as soon as we get a chance to get to Hogsmeade," Severus assured her.

"Well, I'm so excited. Now, you both must decide what you are going to do about your future!"

"We know," Severus said. "Well, we've got some studying to do, but we wanted you to be the first to know."

"Thank you, dear. You two lovebirds go have a nice night!" She gave them one last hug and then let them leave.

"ENGAGED! TO SNAPE?" Sirius bellowed.

"That's wonderful!" Lily said.

"WONDERFUL?" James screamed.

"YES, WONDERFUL!" Remus and Lily both said.

"Remus?" Sirius said, shocked.

"James, Sirius--he makes her happy. Can't you tell? Ever since they started dating, he hasn't done anything to harm her!" Remus replied.

Hermione was watching her friends bicker back and forth on her behalf. James and Sirius' reactions were the same as Harry and Ron's would have been. At this moment, she felt like she was back in her own time and was secretly enjoying it.

"They're too young!" James said.

"*Too young!* You already asked me to marry *you*, James Potter! We're all the same age!" Lily screamed at James.

"Okay, okay. Mione, as long as you're happy, we will be supportive. Sirius and I are just... surprised," James said calmly after Lily had given him the evil glare.

"It's okay; I figured you guys would be shocked," Hermione said while suppressing her laughter.

"Congratulations, Mione." Peter squeaked.

"Um... Thanks, Peter."

"Well. Both the ladies in my life are getting married! This is going to be one interesting summer!" Sirius said.

Lily and Hermione giggled.

"Now, wait a minute--Lily and I decided to wait at least a year after we graduate!" James said with a look of panic on his face.

"Ah, that's right. So, when do you and Severus plan on getting married?" Sirius asked Hermione.

"The sooner, the better."

"Well, we are all happy for you, Mione." Remus walked over to her and gave her a hug. "I'll be right back."

Remus walked out of the door. Severus was on the outside waiting, like usual.

"Lupin."

"Severus. The person I came to see."

"Oh."

Remus held out his hand. "Thank you for making her happy. Congratulations."

Severus took his hand. "Thanks," he muttered.

That night Hermione could not sleep. She tossed and turned, thinking about what she had done.

Oh, Hermione, you've really let your emotions get the best of you! What's going to happen when you go back to the future? How is he going to take it? SHITE! Okay, you have to end this. But you can't hurt him.

She remembered the conversation they had back during the time when she was working with him on the potion; he had said something about why he joined the Death Eaters.

The potion was brewing, and Hermione was trying to read one of the new books she had bought, but her attention kept going over to what Snape was doing. He was flipping the pages in another new book, but she could tell he wasn't reading it.

"Yes, Miss Granger?"

"Nothing, sir."

"I know something's on your mind; you can't hide that from me."

"Well, it's just... really... quiet in here."

"I figured you would enjoy that. Silence is bliss."

"Well, usually, yes. But... never mind."

"Go on. I'm listening."

"Well, I don't know... I was just wondering..."

"--about my time as a Death Eater?"

"Yes! And other things."

"Why do you care? Besides being a nosy little girl."

"You're right; I'm sorry. It's none of my business." She looked down at her book. She could feel him eyeing her and shivers ran up her spine.

"Anything we say or do will not leave this room, understand?" he said after a moment of silence.

She looked back at him. He had closed the book and placed it in his lap.

"Yes, sir."

I joined them shortly after I graduated from Hogwarts. I wasn't going to, but something happened at the end of my seventh year that changed my mind.

Then, when I found out that the Dark Lord was going to kill Potter and Lily, I warned Dumbledore. After he killed them, I realized the mistake I had made and vowed to bring him down. So, I was hired as the Potions master."

She wasn't expecting him to open up like he did--he was such a private man--but she listened closely.

"May I ask what changed your mind?"

"You may, and I will tell you one day, I promise, but not today. Just know that something was taken away from me, and I wasn't too happy about it."

"I'm surprised you're telling me this to begin with; I know how you value your privacy, but thank you."

"I have a reason for trusting in you. But again, I will tell you one day."

She didn't know what he meant by that, but he had a genuine smile across his face.

He must have seen her concern and continued, "All will be revealed after the war. Right now, it's not safe to know all of the answers."

"Yes, sir. But please continue. From what Harry tells me, you hated his father, Sirius and Professor Lupin."

"Hate is a strong word. But at first, yes, I did hate them. However, during my seventh year, it diminished to more like... a strong dislike for them. The relationship could be described like the one between Mister Malfoy and Potter."

"I see. Harry doesn't hate Draco, but he doesn't like him either."

"Exactly. Remus is a different story though. He was a bit more... manageable than Potter and Black."

"Is that why you brew the Wolfsbane Potion for him?"

"Yes. He doesn't deserve the life that was given him. Although, I don't hold him completely blameless for things either. Enough about me for right now. What about you, Miss Granger? What are you planning after your seventh year?"

"Oh. Well, I would like to apprentice in something; I'm not sure what yet. Maybe continue my education at a Muggle university. Actually, I haven't given it much thought because of this war."

"Whatever you decide, I'm sure you will be more than adequate."

She blushed.

"Time to check our potion." He rose out of his chair and walked to the lab table.

After considering the memory, she now knew why he had joined the Death Eaters.

It was me that was taken away from him in his seventh year! I must have broken up with him, and he never got over it. Okay, so breaking his heart is out of the question. Just live your life, Hermione, now in the present--the past--whatever! ERR!! I'll just have to explain who I really am--maybe if I wrote it in a letter, the Time-Turner wouldn't activate. Or, maybe I should tell him without wearing the stupid thing! Yes, that's it! I'll try that! Okay, do it soon, Granger; after spring break!

A million thanks to my beta, Lariope.

Chapter 7

Chapter 7 of 9

Hermione accidentally, on purpose, uses a Time-Turner. What happens when she travels back to the Marauder era? What will become of her future? Travel with her as she embarks on a journey that no one, especially Severus Snape, will forget.

A/N: Thanks to Lariope who continues to support this story--no matter how many times she has to beta it! And now--it's time for some answers!

"All right. I'm ready," Harry announced.

"Drink this--every last drop. This will keep your soul from splitting when you cast the killing curse, but it will only last for forty-eight hours, so you'd better kill him within that time frame, Potter," Snape said.

Harry grabbed the tiny bottle and emptied it into his mouth. Dumbledore walked over to him and handed him his own wand.

"Most wizards don't usually have the ability to use another's wand, but the potion Severus brewed helps mask the identity of the holder. It's a very dangerous potion in that regard, but we had to do what we had to do."

"I'm not sure I understand," Harry said.

There was silence in the room.

"He means that Professor Snape and Hermione used Dark magic to create that potion; isn't that right, Professor?" Ron said, looking over at Dumbledore.

"Yes, Mister Weasley. I know how you don't approve of having to use Dark magic, but we had no other choice," Dumbledore said toward Harry.

"As long as it works, and it vanquishes him for good, then I don't give a damn anymore," Harry said.

"Good. Keep that thought. Let's go," Snape said quickly.

"Good luck, Harry. We'll be right behind you," Lupin said.

"Harry, mate--"

"Ron, if for some reason I don't make it back... take care of Hermione."

"I will." Ron stepped up to Harry and took his best friend into a tight squeeze. "Take care of yourself," Ron whispered.

"Can we go now?" Severus said impatiently.

Harry let Ron go and followed Severus out of Dumbledore's office and down the stairs.

"So, you and Hermione spent your seventh year together--"

"Not now, Potter!"

"Yes, sir," Harry said.

They walked quietly the rest of the way down to the Apparition point. It was an uncomfortable silence that chilled Severus to the bone. It was time. It was time to fully protect this boy next to him.

"Give me your arm so I can take us to the Dark Lord," Severus said when they walked through the gates to Hogwarts.

Harry held his arm out, and Severus snaked his right arm underneath it. He was holding his wand and magically pulled back his left sleeve, revealing his Dark Mark. He touched the tip of his wand to the skull, and the two of them disappeared into the night.

A week after getting engaged, Hermione decided it was time to tell her fiancé the truth. She carefully hid the Time-Turner under her mattress, hoping that if she didn't wear it, then she could speak the truth. She was now pacing back and forth by her bed, working up the nerve to talk to Severus. She had told him to meet her on top of the Astronomy Tower Saturday around noon, and it was now fifteen minutes till twelve o'clock. Hermione quickly ran a brush through her bushy hair, checked herself in her mirror, and ran out of the dorm.

Severus was sitting on a bench reading a book while he waited for her arrival. As soon he saw her, he closed the book and smiled; Hermione's heart started to ache.

"Hi, Mione," he said as she slowly walked over to him.

"Hi, Severus."

He stood up and tried to pull her into a hug, but Hermione backed away.

"What's wrong?" he asked. His tone was suddenly not so cheerful.

"Severus, I have something to tell you, and it's been eating me up for a long time. I just want you to listen. Don't interrupt me until I'm finished," she said.

Severus stared at her like he was reading her mind, and Hermione felt like she was back in the present with him as her professor, not with her fiancé.

"If this is about Black or any other guy--"

"I swear, it isn't. Nothing like that. Look, just sit down and let me explain everything. It's a long story."

He didn't move.

Hermione started fidgeting with her ring. "Okay, don't sit down." She took a deep breath and looked into his eyes. "Severus, I'm not the person you think I am."

"What do you mean?" he said dryly.

Her palms were sweating, and her heart was racing. "My name isn't Mione Jean; it's Hermione Jean Granger. I'm not from Beauxbatons. I'm from the future, almost twenty years into the future to be exact. I used a Time-Turner and came back here trying to warn Lily, James, Remus and Sirius about their destinies. I am actually a Hogwarts student, and you are my Potions master.

"I know you know who Lord Voldemort is, and he is going to end up hurting our world. He is going to kill James and Lily and attempt to kill their son, Harry; and Sirius gets put in Azkaban for twelve years for their murder. I told you it's a long story, but basically, I can't be engaged to you right now. When I go back to the future, whenever that will be, things will be different.

"You are my teacher, and before I came here, I had already fallen in love with you. I now know that you loved me, and when I return I can give you love in return, but you will still be my professor, and there is a war going on, and you are in the middle of it. Err... this is so complicated. What I'm trying to say is that, Severus, I love you. I love you now, and I love you in the future, but I am going to have to go back in time and can't marry you right now. I don't belong in this world; I need you to wait for me. Do you understand anything that I have said?"

Hermione thought she had spoken so fast that he didn't hear her. She knew she had started to get teary-eyed, and he looked very blurry.

"Severus?" She tried to reach out and touch him, but found that she couldn't because she was spinning. She felt her ring slipping off her finger, and she glanced downward, but all she saw was a gold chain around her neck.

"WHAT THE HELL! HOW DID THIS GET BACK AROUND MY NECK? SEVERUS! CAN YOU HEAR ME? STOP! STOP! STOP!"

The scene in front of Hermione was now completely distorted. She saw figures moving at lightning speed in front of her, and no matter how hard she screamed, the Time-Turner was taking her back into the future and wasn't stopping at her command.

It was around three o'clock in the morning, and the war on Voldemort was over. Harry and Snape had successfully snuck their way into his presence and started the battle. Voldemort had laughed when he saw Harry pointing his wand at him and tried to explain that in no way could he strike him dead because of *Priori Incantatem*. Harry quickly gathered all his hatred and proved Voldemort wrong. As soon as he cast the Avada Kedavra curse and killed Voldemort, the Death Eaters broke out into battle against him and Snape. The Order and Aurors had been waiting and fought back, taking control of the situation. Unfortunately, several Death Eaters had escaped.

In fact, three of the most powerful Death Eaters went missing.

Lucius, Bellatrix and Rodolphus were nowhere to be found.

Dumbledore was the person who made sure Voldemort was surely dead and gone this time. He cast several spells over the body and found that his soul was gone. Tonks and Mad-Eyed burned his body and alerted the Ministry to the situation while the others looked after the wounded.

Ron had stayed at the school along with several members of Dumbledore's Army and the Order of the Phoenix, as well as Fred and Kingsley; they were the backup team in case everyone else was killed during the battle that night. Ron was pacing and waiting for some news when he noticed that the glass basin with Hermione's aura was starting to shift. He walked over to it and watched her aura disappear from the seventh floor and then reappear above the Astronomy Tower where it became a solid purple. From Dumbledore's explanation, Ron knew that she was physically back at Hogwarts, and since it wasn't a foggy white, she wasn't dead.

"Blimey! Hermione's back!" he screamed.

The others in the room dashed over to him and looked down in the bowl.

"She's on the Astronomy Tower! We need to go get her!" Ron explained.

"Should we wait for Dumbledore?" asked Ginny.

"NO! She could be hurt!" Ron snapped. "Besides, it could be hours before they return--if they return."

They all looked at each other mournfully.

"Fine--"

There was suddenly a bright red flash throughout the room, and a rush of wind swept through them. Dumbledore had appeared, along with Fawkes.

"Albus! How's the war?" Kingsley said.

"Over. We won." Dumbledore smiled. He started muttering some foreign words and swishing his wand around. "I'll be right back," he said and Disapparated.

"Hey! I thought you couldn't Disapparate--"

Several *POPS* filled the room before Ron could finish speaking. Harry, Lupin, George and Molly all Apparated into the office. They were quickly followed by the rest of the Order and, finally, Snape and Dumbledore.

"How--"

"I lowered the wards, Mister Weasley, so that we could all gather here quickly," Dumbledore explained.

"Oh. Harry, you all right?" Ron rushed over to his friend, who was bleeding and scratched.

"Yeah. I did it. I killed him. That was the scariest thing I have ever done! I still can't believe it's over," Harry said with a tired voice.

"Gather round, please. Now, the Aurors and Ministry are cleaning up the mess back on the battlefield. Anyone with wounds, who can not heal them themselves, needs to go to the hospital wing and see Madam Pomfrey. I am very proud of all of you tonight. We will celebrate soon--but tonight, just rest. We still have several Death Eaters on the loose, but the Aurors will be on top of that. We will meet down in the Great Hall at noon for a nice lunch. Until then--"

"BUT, PROFESSOR! WAIT!" Ron yelled before anyone could leave the office.

"Yes, Mister Weasley?"

"It's Hermione. She's back!"

Snape had been standing next to Dumbledore, looking grim, but he suddenly shot over to the glass basin, nearly knocking people over, and peered down into it.

"She's on the Astronomy Tower!" he said. "Are the Apparating wards still down?" he asked.

"Yes," Dumbledore said.

Snape was gone.

When he arrived on the tower, he ran over to the opposite side. He knew exactly where she was, because it had been nearly twenty years since she left him by the bench in the corner. He heard the faint pops of the others Apparating behind him, but he kept running.

He finally came into view of the bench and saw Hermione lying broken on the stone ground. Her legs were tangled underneath her; one arm was across her stomach and her other was out to the side. The wind was causing her hair to blow across her face.

"Mione!" Snape said as he kneeled down next to her. Her eyes were closed, and her body was shivering. He magically unbuttoned his long black robes and wrapped her in them, without moving her body.

"DON'T TOUCH HER!" he yelled when Harry approached. "She could be hurt! Go get Poppy!"

Ron quickly joined them, followed by Dumbledore. "Poppy's on her way, Severus."

"Oh, Hermione," Ron said, upset.

"Move out of my way! Move! Move!" Madam Pomfrey shouted at the small crowd that had gathered around Hermione and Snape.

She quickly did a few spells over her body. "No broken bones!"

Snape felt relief wash through him. She wasn't physically hurt.

Poppy conjured a stretcher, magically lifted Hermione onto it and started taking her back toward the hospital wing.

"Look, I can't have everyone in here while I work on her!" Madam Pomfrey said as she entered the room.

"I'm staying!" Ron yelled.

Madam Pomfrey whipped around and saw a determined young man looking back at her, along with his best friend. "I'm sorry, but nobody is staying!"

A hand grabbed her arm as she was turning around. Then she saw who it was.

"Please, Poppy," Snape pleaded.

"Not even--"

He squeezed her arm a little tighter and begged again. "Please."

"Fine, but stay out of my way!"

"WHAT! Why does **he** get to stay?" Ron yelled as the doors to the hospital wing started closing.

"I'm sure all the answers will be revealed once Miss Granger wakes up, Mister Weasley," Dumbledore said with a smile as he looked over his glasses at Ron and Harry. He caught Lupin's eye and winked at him.

"Severus, you said she had a Time-Turner--I need to know, was she playing with it that day she disappeared?" Madam Pomfrey asked.

"No, why?"

"Because this is what happens when a person gets jolted into time without actually setting the Time-Turner. Meaning that had she known she was going to go back through time, her mind would have prepared her body for the travel; without knowing it, the unexpected time travel causes shock in the body. It's like being hit with ice water; if you see it coming, you can prepare your body, sparing it from the initial surprise, but if you didn't know you were going to be sprayed with a bucket of ice water, and it just happened, the jolt to your body would be greater. Understand?"

"Yes, somehow the Time-Turner activated, and now she has been rendered unconscious."

"Yes," she said.

"What can you do?"

"Just replenish her with liquids and some healing potions, but not much really. Her body and mind need to rest. I don't know how long she'll be asleep, but we shouldn't force her to wake."

"I won't leave her side until she does."

"Severus, first of all, you need to be healed as well, and your body needs sleep, too. For twenty years, you have been spying back and forth on Voldemort--we won. It's over--and now it's time to relax."

"Not until I know that the woman I love is safe."

Poppy walked to the opposite side of the bed and placed her hands on his shoulders. "She is safe, Severus. She's just very tired. You will be no good to her if you pass out from exhaustion."

"I've waited so long for this moment! When she wakes, she will know that I love her. I've missed her so much!" Severus leaned into her open arms and started releasing his feelings. He wept until no more tears could come from his eyes, and she just rocked him ever so gently. When the blurriness from his tears left his eyes, he saw that Dumbledore was standing next to Poppy, but he didn't move from her arms. He was never embarrassed to cry in her arms.

"What?" he said quietly.

"Severus, I just wanted to tell you that I know all about Hermione. I may be old, but I'm not blind to the matters of the heart. Therefore, I will not stop you two, and I will make sure no one else will either. You deserve some happiness after all of these years."

Severus finally lifted his head from the embrace of the woman he thought of as a mother. "What do you mean?"

"I mean that I do not disapprove of your love, and you need not fear for your job. The situation is complex, and so the rules against dating a student will not be applied to you. I want you to be happy and live the life that you have always wanted. But, I do want a full story when she is ready to talk. I'm sure everyone will want to hear this."

"I appreciate that. But, she may not want me. I'm not the boy that I was; I'm the man that she fears."

"She has never feared you as her professor nor as a Death Eater. If she had, she would have never worked with you over the summer, correct? And I do believe that you both enjoyed yourselves."

"Yes, we did, but that's because I knew who she was then. I let her see another side of me. I tried very hard to be myself around her then, yet not blow my cover at the same time."

"I know you did, and I think she saw that. She has never feared you. Just be patient, my boy. Just be patient. You never know, she may surprise you. She fell in love with you then, knowing who you were, so..." Dumbledore trailed off, leaving Snape to finish his thought for himself.

Severus saw the twinkle in his eye before he watched Dumbledore turn around and leave.

"Well, at least you have his approval. This is wonderful news! But, dear, I do need to tend to your and everyone else's wounds. Let Hermione rest," Poppy said.

She walked over to a cabinet and then handed him a small potion to drink, pulled the curtains around Hermione and placed a silencing charm over her so she could sleep in peace. She nearly had to drag Severus away from Hermione's side. She then ushered the people waiting outside the door into the infirmary and started her healing duties. Severus quietly left the room and walked slowly down to his private quarters, where he went straight to sleep.

It had been less than week since the defeat of Voldemort. If it had been up to Snape, he would have slept through the celebration ceremony the day after the war, but Dumbledore made sure he attended. And if he'd had his way, he would have sat in the chair next to Hermione the entire time, but Poppy didn't allow him to disturb her rest. So, he was stuck giving interviews, listening to different celebration speeches and all the while continued teaching. He was careful to avoid any questions concerning Hermione, although Harry and Ron did try very hard to corner him on several occasions. Thankfully, Lupin helped him out by keeping the boys away from him.

"Do you have another Marauder's Map, Professor? You always seem to know where Harry and I are!" Ron complained while he and Harry were being led away from the dungeons by Remus. They had stayed back after class to try to get some answers out of Severus, when Lupin suddenly appeared and interrupted them again.

"We professors never give away our secrets. And I thought I told you two last time--leave Professor Snape alone. When Hermione wakes up, you can question her then."

"Then you tell us. What happened back then?" asked Harry.

"It's not for me to say at this time."

"Fine, we'll leave him alone. But what if she doesn't wake soon?" Harry said.

"According to Madam Pomfrey, she will wake up when her body is good and ready. Until then--"

"We know," they both said sulkily.

Hermione felt trapped. She was trying to move, but her body was stuck under something. She wiggled her fingers and felt that her ring was missing from her hand. She didn't know where, or when, she was. She just knew that she had gone through time and wherever she was located was a dark place, and her body was confined in something. She wanted to scream, but couldn't; she could only feel herself mumbling, but didn't know what she was saying.

Then she heard a voice. It was far away, but she knew she had heard the voice before. She mumbled something again, but nothing happened. The voice disappeared. Hermione wanted to scream. She was scared and alone and didn't want that familiar voice to disappear. Again she tried to move, but couldn't. She only could wiggle her fingers. Panic was starting to set in, but then the voice was back--along with several others. She couldn't make out what they were saying, and she wondered if they knew she was trapped under this force. She took in a deep breath and started screaming with all her might; she wanted them to help her.

The boys had reached the stairs that led up to the upper floors when Madam Pomfrey came running down them, nearly falling into Harry and Ron.

"Hermione's awake! Severus! Severus! Hermione's awake!" she shouted.

Harry and Ron took off toward the hospital wing. Severus came running out of his classroom when he heard her shouting, and he and Lupin followed Poppy and the boys.

"What has she said? Who is she asking for?" Severus questioned her on the way up the stairs.

"I was checking on her, when she started muttering about a ring. She kept saying, 'My ring, my ring.' I'm not sure what she means by that. She hasn't opened her eyes yet, but she'll be waking soon."

"I have a feeling I know what she means," Snape said as he entered the infirmary. Harry and Ron were waiting on the outside of her curtains; Poppy had placed a ward around her bed so that no one would disturb her. She quickly removed the charm. As soon as the silencing ward was dropped, they heard Hermione screaming.

Poppy rushed to her side, trying to calm her down.

"What's wrong? Why is she screaming?" Snape yelled over her shouts.

"She must not know where she is! Just keep talking to her. Harry, Ron--come in here and talk to her, help her wake up!"

"Hermione, come on! Wake up, it's us!" Ron said.

"Hermione, it's okay. We're here." Harry said in a soft voice.

"Miss Granger, wake up! You can do it," Poppy said.

Her screams stopped, but she was still stuck in her own subconscious. The boys looked at Lupin, who was looking at Snape. Then together, the two men pushed past Harry and Ron, leaned toward her ears and softly called for her.

"Mione, open your eyes," Lupin whispered.

"Mione, I miss you. Wake up. Mione, please!" Snape said.

Suddenly Hermione's eyes shot open. Her breathing was uneasy, and her voice was raspy when she said, "Where am I?"

"Miss Granger, you are in the hospital wing at Hogwarts," Madam Pomfrey said while pushing Snape to the side and handing her a glass of water.

Hermione wiggled free from the tight covers that held her in place and took the glass. "What year is it?" she said, after guzzling down the drink.

"1997. You're back from the past. Do you remember anything?"

Hermione finally started looking around at the people who stood in the room gazing down at her.

"Harry, Ron! I've missed you!"

She looked over at Lupin. "Professor--"

"Hello, Mione," he said smiling.

Slowly she looked over to Snape, tears unable to be held back any longer. "Severus, I'm so sorry!" Without warning, Hermione started to sob. She covered her face with her hands.

"Hermione!" Ron said, shocked.

"Everyone out!" Madam Pomfrey said. She pulled her wand out and turned it toward Harry and Ron, who slowly backed away. They looked confused and upset, but everyone knew not to argue with a person pointing a wand at them. Lupin followed Poppy out of the small area. Then she placed Severus and Hermione back into the Silencing Charm and pulled the curtains around them.

All Severus wanted to do was pull her into his arms, but he held back.

"Stop crying, Miss Granger. We need to talk."

"It's all my fault!" she howled.

"Miss Granger!"

"STOP CALLING ME THAT!" she screamed through her hands.

"Why!"

"You know why!"

"Then what should I call you? Mione?" he said curtly.

Hermione's sobs settled down, and she looked through her fingers at the man in black.

"We both have a lot of explaining to do. And not only to each other, but to Dumbledore. He wants to know what happened--especially Potter and Weasley."

She lowered her hands into her lap and looked down. "I know," she said quietly after calming down from her fit.

"Now's not the time though, so don't say anything just yet."

"Why not! I have so much to tell to you!"

"Because we are in the middle of the hospital wing! This is not where I would like to discuss things with you. When you are released, we will talk somewhere more comfortable!"

He had every right to be snappish. She must have put him through hell.

"How about we talk on the hill across the black lake? Do you remember?"

Her heart started fluttering. "Of course I do."

He grinned at her and started to leave but then she said, "I lost it. I'm sorry."

He whipped around and started unbuttoning the collar of his frock coat. He stopped midway down his chest, and then unbuttoned the white shirt underneath. He reached down and pulled a silver chain that was around his neck out of his clothes and held it toward her.

"You mean this?" he said, eyebrow cocked and lips turned slightly upward.

She watched him unbutton slowly and then saw that dangling on his silver chain was her antique engagement ring. She nodded her head and tried desperately to hold back her tears again.

I wonder if he has been wearing that the entire time? She saw him looking at her intensely and suddenly felt a chill up her spine.

"Yes, I have. Every single day," he said. Then he dropped it back down his shirt and used his wand to button back up, turned, and left Hermione, who burst into tears once more.

Hermione walked slowly down to the boathouse the next day. It had taken a while to convince Harry and Ron that she would tell them everything after she spoke to Snape; they didn't seem to understand that speaking inside a hospital wing was very uncomfortable. But with the help of Remus, they left her alone, and she was released that night.

Now, the only thing on Hermione's mind was what was going to happen between her and Severus. She wanted things to be the same as before she had left the past, but knew that they couldn't. He was waiting at the boats when she arrived, just like before. He was in his usual black clothes, but missing was the billowing robe.

"Hi," she mumbled.

He simply nodded his head while helping her into the boat. She watched him as he once again made the boat leave the slip. It was all very strange to Hermione. To her, she had just seen him do this a few months ago, and it was very fresh in her mind. To him, he hadn't been in this boat with her for almost two decades.

They sat quietly as the boat took them across the lake. Hermione remembered the first time they had gone across, when he had splashed her with the water, then kissed her for the first time. And now, here she was again, as silent as death, wishing he would say something before she started crying again. She kept her eyes on the floor of the boat and could feel him staring at her, but she didn't know what to say.

Suddenly, a splash of cold water hit her face! She looked up and locked eyes with him *Did he just splatter me? And is he smirking?*

"I remember, too," he said quietly.

"Are you reading my thoughts like you did back in the infirmary?"

"I don't need to do Legilimency to know what you are thinking. I can see it in your expression. You were never very good at hiding your feelings."

Hermione started to blush and tears sprang to her eyes, but she blinked rapidly and quickly pushed them back.

The boat hit the bank, and he carefully helped her out. They hiked up to their hill, but instead of producing a blanket and picnic basket, he conjured a small café table and two chairs with two cups of tea.

"So, where shall we start?" he said as he sat down.

"No idea," she said, slipping into the opposite seat.

"Then let's start in the most logical place; the beginning. It's my seventh year at Hogwarts, and you show up as Mione Jean, a transfer student from Beauxbatons. Tell me, how did you pull that off?"

"Well, when I was still in the future, I was in the Room of Requirement, so when I went back in time, I ended up there. I asked for a way to conceal my identity, and the room produced clothes, money, transcripts, luggage--everything I needed to fit in. Do you want to know why I went into the past?"

"I already know, but we'll get to that later. So, you knew who I was, yet you allowed certain... things to happen between us, knowing who I was going to become in the future, your professor, Death Eater and so on. Why did you do that to me?"

"You think I did that on purpose? All these years, you've thought that? And please don't lie to me or hide anything from me; it's just you and me out here."

"When have I ever lied to you? I should be asking you not to lie to me. Again, why did you pretend to love me?" he said, getting upset.

That hurt. This wasn't going well. "I never pretended. There is something you don't know, before I left... I... was already in love with you."

"Nonsense," he said, glaring.

"I was. I have had a crush on you since the end of fifth year, then that summer after sixth year, you had me assist you with that potion. It confirmed my feelings for you. Do Legilimency if you don't believe me. I loved you before I went back in time! So I ask you again, have you really thought that it was a lie all these years?"

He took a sip of tea and then looked back at her. "No. I knew your feelings were real. But when I found out who you really were, I did start to think that maybe you did it for some other reason, but I hoped you hadn't. Then, during that summer, I knew your feelings were authentic and that you really did love me back then. So, I did everything I could to make you want to love me when you came back into the future. But enough of that for now. There were several times you slipped up, weren't there?"

She looked at him confused. "What do you mean?"

"I recall you calling me Professor during one--" he cleared his throat, "time we made love. And I also heard you muttering about how I would be a good Potions master."

"Ah, yes. I remember. I told you I loved you before I went into the past. I've had fantasies... never mind. But yes, I did slip up, and not just with you. I accidentally blurted out that I knew Remus was a werewolf and Sirius and James were Animagi."

"How did you get out of that one?"

"Told them I figured it out with Remus, which was true, because I did. I'm sure you remember my third year as well as I do."

"Indeed."

"And then I said that I saw them one night."

"Hmm."

"My turn to ask questions. What made you change your mind about wanting to go on a date with me?"

His lip curled as he spoke, "Lupin."

"Remus?"

"Yes, *Remus*. He was rather annoying and basically said I was being a fool if I didn't go out with you. He saw me turn you down."

"Oh. So, you don't really hate him, do you?"

"No. Annoying? Yes. A friend? You could call it that."

Hermione smiled. She was glad that the last two people she loved in the past could get along in the future. Most of the time.

"Why didn't you try to go back into the future once you had done what you wanted to do?" he asked.

"Well, I went there for a reason, but it never got accomplished. I did try to go back, but the Time-Turner wouldn't budge. I tried several times. Then, whenever I made an effort to try and warn someone about their future, I would speed up in time, and they didn't notice I was gone. I would force the spinning to stop in my mind, and it did. That was the only time I could go into the future."

"Hmm. We'll get back to that." Then he said, "Lucius Malfoy."

"What about him?" she said through clenched teeth.

"Why did you really attack him that night in Hogsmeade?"

"Because I knew the influence he had on you. I knew he was going to be the one who turned you to Voldemort. I wanted you away from him. But apparently that didn't work. You even promised me you would stay away from him!"

"I did. Things changed."

"I'm sorry. It was me, wasn't it?"

"Not entirely."

They each took sips of their tea and collected their thoughts.

"What happened that night I went back into the future?" she asked, after waiting in silence for nearly five minutes.

"You mean the night my world turned upside down? Well, you were talking, then suddenly, you were gone. You disappeared in front of my eyes. I remember how you

started fading, then next thing I heard was a clink on the ground; it was your ring."

"Oh! I can't imagine the pain that it caused you."

"You won't need to. I brought the Pensieve. I want you to live it," he snarled.

"Why?" she said, slightly taken aback.

"I want you to know what my life has been like since you left me. I am going to show you everything. It will help you understand things better. However, it can wait until I'm done asking some questions," he said and then continued, "How did you not go insane? You were there for seven months; how did you keep it together?"

Hermione was upset about him wanting to show her the hell he had been through, but she knew that it was only fair. She continued to answer his questions.

"Well, I admit, there were times when I was a mess. I missed my family, friends, school, and even you as an adult. I cried myself to sleep a lot. But being able to go into the Room of Requirement as my family home helped. Do you remember seeing those pictures on my dresser of Harry? You said he looked like James!"

"Yes. That must have been quite amusing to you at the time," he said dryly.

"It was a little funny."

"But not what happened after that," he said, looking at her with his dark eyes.

Hermione started blushing again, remembering their sexual encounter right after that incident. "You still... think of those times?"

"There hasn't been a day that I haven't thought about you in one way or another. And for those times, I didn't have to think at all. I have a Pensieve for a reason."

She gasped. "And that reason is?"

"You. I made sure that I bought one, and it cost me everything I had, but I didn't want to lose the memories that I had of you. I never thought I was going to see you again, and that was the only way I could."

She dropped her eyes. "Thank you for not forgetting me."

Again, they each sipped their tea and looked at the beautiful view.

Finally, Severus said, "Ready to see what happened after you disappeared?"

"Not really, but if you insist."

He stood up and pulled a miniature Pensieve from his pocket and set it on the table. He made the tea glasses disappear, and he transfigured the Pensieve to the correct size. Then, he pulled out some phials and dropped his memories into the basin. Then, together, they dipped their heads inside and fell into his recollections.

Hermione was standing next to his younger self. Severus was standing next to her.

"If this is about Black or anyone other guy--"

"I swear, it isn't. Nothing like that. Look, just sit down and let me explain everything. It's a long story."

The young Severus didn't budge.

"Okay, don't sit down." She took a deep breath and looked into his eyes. "Severus, I'm not the person you think I am."

"What do you mean?" he said.

Hermione watched her past self fade and disappear, just how Severus had described. She watched his younger self reach out and swipe the area that she had been standing in. Then, she heard the clinking sound of her ring. He slowly picked it up.

"Mione? MIONE! Are you having a laugh? How did you do that? MIONE! You dropped your ring!" Quickly, Severus started looking around the tower for her, but couldn't find her. She saw the panic appear on his face.

"MIONE!" he screamed as loud as he could, but the air was still and nothing happened.

He started running, and Hermione quickly followed him, with Severus behind her. She watched the younger Severus run down to the hospital wing and burst through the doors.

"She's gone! She's gone!"

"Severus! What's going on?" Madam Pomfrey asked.

"Mione! We were on top of the Astronomy Tower, and she was trying to tell me something, and she disappeared! Something isn't right--we have to find her!"

"Calm down. What do you mean she disappeared?"

"DISAPPEARED! Like she Disapparated or something!"

"We need to talk to the Headmaster."

The memory became foggy, and Hermione knew that it was shifting into another one.

"I've done all the locating charms; she's nowhere to be found, Mister Snape. She must have Disapparated. The owl that I sent her family even returned with the letter; it couldn't find them. I'm not sure what is going on; I have no answers at this time. I will have the Ministry look into it, but we have to assume that she just left the school. Were you fighting?" Dumbledore asked him.

"NO! Well, not really, no. She said she needed to tell me something. I knew from her tone of voice that it wasn't good. Do you think that was her way of breaking up with me?"

"I don't know. From what Madam Pomfrey tells me, you were going to marry her?" Dumbledore asked.

"Yes, but maybe she changed her mind! Look, she even left her ring!"

The memory shifted again. This time they were in front of the portrait of the Fat Lady.

"I don't think she left you, Severus. Mione loved you, trust us," Remus said.

"Why would I trust any of you?" Severus shouted.

"Because we loved her, and we were her friends. She loved you--something isn't right. She wouldn't just leave like that," Lily said.

"How do you know? She left in an awful hurry from Beauxbatons. What if she did the same thing to another fool?"

They all looked at each other in silence.

"No. I sense it. Something is wrong about her disappearance," said Remus.

"Look, Snape, if Remus can sense it, then it's probably true. I think you need to look into it further, even if Dumbledore isn't," said James.

"You didn't have anything to do with this, did you, Black?" Severus snapped at the handsome young man.

"Of course not. She was like family to me; I'm just as upset as you are!"

"I bet you are."

"Enough! Both of you. We won't find her with you two fighting!" Lily yelled.

"You're going to help me?"

"That's what friends do, Severus," Lily explained.

"I don't even know where to start," he said.

"We'll come up with a plan," James suggested.

The memory started to shift again. They were outside by the Black Lake; it was graduation day. The ceremony looked like it had been finished for a while, and the guests were trickling out of the area.

"It's been two months, Severus. We haven't found much, and tomorrow we all will be leaving here. What else can we do?" Lily said.

Severus looked upset. "We can't do much else. I guess we don't have the... power necessary to find her. But I do thank you for all that you have done. All of you."

"Do I hear Severus Snape thanking me?" Sirius teased.

"Only for the sake of Mione, you arrogant arse," Severus replied.

"Severus, what are your plans? Where are you going to go?" Lily said in a concerned voice.

"I have one more option for finding Mione. If that doesn't work out, then I guess I'll take that scholarship to the Magical University in London."

"Just don't do anything stupid, Severus. Mione wouldn't want that," said Lily.

"Who says I am going to do that?"

"We know of the offer Lucius Malfoy has given you. Voldemort won't help you without some sort of... payment," Remus said.

Severus looked over at James. "If Lily suddenly disappeared, would you go to the end of the earth looking for her?"

"In a heartbeat," James said, looking strongly into Severus' black eyes.

"I'll see you all around, then." He started walking away and then suddenly stopped and turned back around with his wand at the ready.

"Levicorpus," Snape said with a grin on his face.

Sirius and James were flipped upside down in the air, and Lily, Remus and Peter laughed.

Again, the scene changed, but this time they were in a dark room only lit by a small fire in the fireplace.

"I can back you financially. I've always told you that, Severus. But I need you to join the Dark Lord with me. I promise he will make sure Mione is found. He has powers that even Dumbledore has not."

"I don't know, Lucius. I promised Mione that I wouldn't join."

"Don't you want to find her? If it was me, and Narcissa was missing, I would do anything to find her. But, suit yourself."

"Fine. But you will back me financially, without making me do things I don't want to do, and you will do it without questions."

"Of course, Severus. I know the power that you have; I know the skills that you possess... They are worth much more than money."

Fog rolled through the memory, and they were now standing outside by a fire pit. There were many Death Eaters watching a ceremony taking place. Voldemort was speaking. Even though she knew she was safe, Hermione was still scared.

"You have proven yourself well, boy. Lucius was right; you are more powerful than most. Hold out your arm. I would be proud to take you under my wing and show you the benefits of having everything you ever wanted."

Voldemort put his wand tip onto the young Severus' arm and burned the Dark Mark into him.

Out of the corner of her eye, Hermione saw the older Severus clutch his left arm; she knew he could still feel the pain.

"Rise, Severus. Welcome to the Death Eaters!"

Chapter 8

Chapter 8 of 9

Hermione accidentally, on purpose, uses a Time-Turner. What happens when she travels back to the Marauder era? What will become of her future? Travel with her as she embarks on a journey that no one, especially Severus Snape, will forget.

A/N: Okay, this one is long. Lots of memories again.

Again, the scene changed. They were at the same spot, but this time his younger self was being held down by several other Death Eaters. One of them was striking his back with a long black whip. Hermione gasped in horror.

"You know how the punishments are, Severus, and just because this is your first one doesn't mean we will go easy on you!" Voldemort hissed.

"Yes, my Lord!" screeched the younger Severus.

Blood was dripping from his back, and he was squirming in pain.

"Next time, when you are given a direct order, do it!"

"Yes, my Lord!"

Suddenly, the Death Eater that was beating him pulled his wand out and pointed it at Severus. His clothes disappeared, and a few Death Eaters pushed Snape forward onto his knees. The one behind Snape moved the front of his robes to the side.

Hermione was sick and tried to turn away.

"Watch it! Watch what I have gone through for you!" the older version hissed.

"No, I don't want to!" she said, shielding her eyes with her hands.

Severus inhaled deeply. "To understand the man that I am today, please watch," he said sternly.

Hermione opened her eyes and watched the older Death Eater push his hardened cock into the younger Snape. She put her hand over her mouth and tears dripped from her eyes. *What have I done?*

"AHHHHHHHHH!"

Harder and harder, the Death Eater pounded into him. Hermione watched how Severus's knees were being scraped on the rough ground and the tears falling from his eyes.

"Grab your dick!" commanded the Death Eater.

He grabbed himself and started stroking, clearly not to give himself pleasure, but to keep from being harmed once again.

"Oh, yes! You're so fucking tight! Ah! AH! YES!" The Death Eater slammed himself inside Severus as he climaxed. When the man was finished, he stood up, cleansed himself, and left Severus naked on the ground, whimpering in a fetal position.

"Now, have you learned your lessssson?" Voldemort hissed.

"Y-yes my Lord. M-my apologizes," he said through his tears.

"I think you owe your punisher a thank you as well!"

Severus uncoiled himself and sat on his knees, then faced the Death Eater that had violated his body, and in a slow and forced voice, he said, "Thank you for making me realize that I did wrong and for showing me the proper punishment, Lucius."

Hermione didn't hear or see the rest of the memory; she had fallen to her knees and started to retch. The realization that it had been Lucius who punished her lover had pushed her over the edge with disgust. The older Severus held her hair back and waited for her to finish before he cast a cleansing charm over her.

The scene had changed while she was sick and this time they were in Dumbledore's Office.

"Are you okay?" he asked her.

"No!"

"Should we leave?" he said unsympathetically.

"No," she muttered. She knew it was important to him that she see everything.

"Good. Pay attention," he snapped.

She rose to her feet and listened to what his younger self was saying. He was in a chair across from Dumbledore, crying.

"He's going to kill Lily and James! You must protect them!"

"You hate them, though. What do you care?"

"It is true that there was no love lost between James and myself. However, he was Mione's friend. And though, two years later, I have still had no word from her, I can't help but know that she would have wanted me to prevent this. It is the only thing left for me to do for her. They were like her family. Please, Professor!"

"Very well. I will protect them. Is that why you joined Voldemort... to find Mione?" Dumbledore asked.

"Yes."

"He hasn't produced any results for you, has he?"

"NO! I've been all over England. I've even gone to France looking for her. I've gone to every Muggle University that I can think of and--nothing!"

"Unfortunately, I don't think you are going to ever find her. I know you don't want to hear that--certainly you did not two years ago, but at least I'm telling you the truth, Severus. Voldemort has lied to you."

"I know, but there's nothing I can do about it now--except to kill myself and end my misery."

"I have a better idea. How about becoming my spy? I will do everything to protect you. You can work here as the Potions master; you'll have to apprentice with Horace first to receive that title, but then the job is yours. I know of your power, Severus. I know you are an Occlumens, and with a little more practice, you could manipulate your images and spy on Voldemort so we can bring him down."

"I'll do it. I should have listened to her; I should have stayed away from Lucius!"

"I have your word that you won't go against me?"

"I swear on my love of Mione Jean, that I will be loyal to you forever, Headmaster!"

The memory shifted once more. They were on the Astronomy Tower.

Severus was sitting on a bench clutching the Daily Prophet.

"If the news of Lily's and James' deaths by Black doesn't bring you back here looking for them... then I don't know what will, Mione. Unless you are dead, of course. No! I will not believe that. I know something happened to you, Mione, but you're not dead. I'll find you someday." He threw the paper down and put his hands on his face, crying silently.

Hermione was also crying, and she didn't notice that she was being pulled back up from the Pensieve until she saw the Black Lake and Hogwarts in the background.

"So, that's what happened after you left. There were no clues, no signs--nothing. Those two years after I graduated were the worst."

"I'm so sorry! The reason I went back in time was so useless! I didn't prevent anything from happening," she cried.

"You say that now, but we shall see."

"Why were you punished like that?" she asked hesitantly.

"That was a normal punishment; everyone received them."

"And from Lucius!"

"He was the one who brought me into the Death Eaters, so it was fitting that he punished me."

"What did you do wrong?" She sat back down on the chair and wiped her eyes.

"I refused to rape and torture some Muggle woman."

Hermione struggled for her breath. "What?"

"Thankfully, by going into Dumbledore's service, I was able to get out of doing Death Eater raids. See, I moved up in ranks when I came back with the news that I was now at Hogwarts and could spy on Dumbledore. Voldemort couldn't resist the new power that I had, so I wasn't forced to rape anyone... ever."

"Oh, Severus, that's so horrible--I mean it's good that you didn't have to do that--just the thought of you having to... rape someone is horrible."

"Indeed."

"I can't believe you didn't give up on me. Most people would have."

"You stole my heart. I didn't have one after you left. The things I did, such as trying to warn Dumbledore about Potter and Lily and going into his service were ~~done~~^{only} because of you. I'm *not* a nice man. The only reason I didn't want to rape anyone wasn't because it was the wrong thing to do, it was because I couldn't stand to have anyone else. I only lusted after you in that way. So when you left, my heart left, and I wanted it back. Besides, I would have done anything for you, and I could never give up hope."

"You're right. You're not a nice man. But you are a good man, and I saw that before I went back to the past. So, what did you do after he was taken down that night he killed Lily and James?"

"Well, for the ten years between that night and your arrival, I tried to lead a normal life. I put myself into my work. I have never dated, which of course made way for some wonderful rumors, but I didn't care. I had Poppy, though, and being around her again really helped. I saw Lupin about once a year when he would come around during the summer months.

"I established myself in the Potions world and, of course, tried each year to teach the D.A.D.A. class. I attempted to do more research on you and came up empty, so I actually decided that if I stopped trying so hard, something might turn up.

"And what do you know? A new batch of first years were standing before me once again. But this time, a bushy-haired witch caught my attention when her name was called by Minerva. Nobody I have ever known had a name that sounded even remotely close to yours until *Hermione* Granger was called to the Sorting Hat. Then, when it placed you in Gryffindor... well... you can imagine how excited I felt. I wanted to talk to you and ask you if your mother, or an aunt, or anyone you knew was named Mione Jean, but then we had our first Potions class together."

"I don't know if I want to hear what you thought about me," she said.

"I believe I have told you on several occasions what I thought about you."

"Insufferable know-it-all?"

"Indeed. Then, you became friends with Potter. So trying to talk to you was no longer an option. Therefore, I went through your records. Of course, it took me nearly till the end of the year to do so--with the events that happened that year because of you three--well, let's just say I didn't have an abundance of free time."

"I'm sure when Harry showed up, your life as you had known it for the past ten years changed considerably," she said.

"You have no idea. Not only was there this annoying little girl who had a name similar to my lost love, but the son of her friends was now at my school. And both of you, along with Weasley, reminded me of the way Potter and Black acted before my seventh year. Of course, since I swore to Dumbledore that I was going to be loyal, I ended up watching out for the boy--I did still owe Potter a life debt.

"So, it took me almost the entire year to get a chance to go through your records. Here, let me just show you." Severus put his wand to his temple once more and pulled out several long strands of memories. And again, they both dipped down into the basin.

They landed in a room that Hermione had never seen. The cathedral-high walls had rows of files on each student that had attended Hogwarts. She saw the younger Snape scanning a special cabinet in the middle of the room. Hermione saw that the label stated: Current Students.

"Granger, Granger, Granger... I know you're in here," he was muttering to himself as he flipped through the large files. "Ah ha!" He pulled a thick folder out, and Hermione looked over his shoulder; it was hers.

She watched him flip through the folder and then pull out a paper that had her family information on it. The top of it stated her full name; Hermione Jean Granger. She looked at the younger Snape's face as he read her name; a flicker of hope seemed to brighten in his eyes.

"I knew it! I knew it wasn't a coincidence... HERMIONE JEAN! She MUST be related to Mione!" He started reading down the listed names of her family members but didn't come across the name he was looking for.

"I must talk to her," he said slamming the folder shut. He quickly put it back and started walking out of the room.

Hermione waited for the memory to shift to the next one.

They were now in the hospital wing, and the younger Severus was just walking through the doors. He wasn't dressed in his professorial robes; he just had black trousers on with a black button-up shirt.

"POPPY!" he yelled.

The Healer came running out of her office. "Severus! You scared me! I didn't think anyone else was here! Are you okay, boy?"

"Yes, I'm fine. All the students are gone and I've wanted to tell you--you know that first year, Hermione Granger?"

"Vaguely. She's friends with Harry Potter?"

"Yes, her."

"What about her?"

"I did some research on her. Guess what her middle name is?" The younger Snape was almost giddy; Hermione hadn't seen him like this before.

"I don't know--"

"JEAN! HerMIONE JEAN!"

"What does this mean?" Madam Pomfrey said with enthusiasm.

"I'm not sure. But she must be related to her somehow. I couldn't find anything in her records, so I'm going to need to talk to her when she returns in the fall."

"Oh, Severus, dear--for your sake, I hope this turns out to be something good."

"It's the only real lead I've had in over ten years, so I know there is still hope!"

The scene changed again. They were still in the hospital wing.

"Did you get a chance to talk to her?" Madam Pomfrey asked. She was sitting behind her desk in the corner, and the young Snape was sitting on the opposite side.

"Every time I've tried, something has blocked me. This whole Chamber of Secrets has really put a damper in things, and now--she's been petrified," he said gloomily.

"I figured you didn't speak with her before she was petrified; that's why I saved this for you," she said, pulling a tiny phial from her pocket and handed it to him from across the table. "It's her blood. When she turned herself into a cat, I had to draw some. I figured you could use it to compare to Mione Jean's. Of course, I don't have a sample of her blood, but I do have a sample of her aura. I did heal her several times back then, and I'm sure we can recall her aura from my wand."

"Of course! That's some difficult magic though--it will take at least several months to complete."

"Yes, it will. You can use Hermione's blood and see if there are similar properties to the aura of Mione's. If so, then at least you will know that they are, in fact, somehow related. It might be better than asking her, because she may not even know for one thing, and it's proving to be too complicated for you to even talk to her about it."

"Yes, this is much better. Thank you, Poppy. I'm going to get started on this right away."

Again, the memory faded, and Hermione and the older Snape were now in his dungeons. His hair was pulled back, and he had a black apron over his black clothes and was working diligently. His potions lab was filled with brewing cauldrons and different bottles filled with colored liquids. He had several large tomes opened and scattered across his room.

"YES!" he had screamed out like a mad scientist. "THEY ARE DEFINITELY RELATED SOMEHOW!"

He placed the sample of liquid that he was looking at down on the table, jumped from his stool and started pacing.

"Okay, the students return in just a few weeks--you will find time to talk to her this year! If she doesn't know where my Mione is, someone in her family should know."

There was a knock on the door, and Severus quickly went to answer it, barely opening it a crack.

"Headmaster. Please come in."

"Thank you, Severus." Snape moved to the side to allow Dumbledore through the door.

"I'm here for a quick visit. I just received word that Sirius Black has escaped from Azkaban; he's coming after Harry."

"Escaped? How? And what does he want with Potter?"

"I'm not sure. But Harry is in more danger than you think; Sirius is his Godfather."

"Shite."

"Exactly."

"So, I take it that you want me to protect him even more?" he spat.

"Well, yes and no. I'm bringing someone here who can help protect him. But I need you to help this new professor more than Harry. I'm sure you won't mind brewing the Wolfsbane Potion for him every month?"

"Oh, for Merlin's sake, Dumbledore! You're going to let Lupin teach the Defense Against Dark Arts class?"

"Yes."

Snape turned around and started mumbling obscenities to himself as he pretended to be cleaning his lab table.

"Thank you, Severus. This means a great deal to the both of us," Dumbledore said in a sweet tone.

The memory shifted to the next scene. Hermione saw herself sitting at one of the lab tables in his classroom. She couldn't believe how much her facial features had changed between her second and third year, or how much her body had grown. The doors slammed opened behind her younger self, and she watched the younger Snape make his appearance in the classroom. Before he spoke, Hermione noticed that he was staring at her younger self and there was a realization that came to his face.

That was the end of the memory, and a new one started. They were back in the hospital wing. Hermione looked over at Severus, waiting for him to say something, but he just ignored her.

"I'm telling you, Poppy, she's Mione Jean!"

"There's no way, Severus Snape! I think you are just wishing it was her."

"Poppy, she changed over the summer--she doesn't look the same. I noticed it in class today. She's grown into her features--well, most of them. Her teeth are still a bit big, but I swear to you, it's her!"

"How can that be?"

"I'm not sure, but I'll let you know when I've figured it out."

The fog rolled through the memory once more, and they were standing in Minerva's office.

"A WHAT?" he screamed at the older witch.

"A Time-Turner. Miss Granger has one--or had one. She turned it in, but she's had one all year."

"That's how Black got away then," he muttered.

Minerva was silent.

"Are you sure she turned the Time-Turner in?"

"Positive. Why."

"Nothing."

Hermione felt herself being pulled back through the Pensieve.

"Why did you stop there?" she asked him.

"I figured you had some questions."

"Yes, or more like clarification. But before I ask, would you mind conjuring me some hot chocolate? It's getting a little cold out."

Snape pulled his wand out, and within a flash two large cups appeared. The steam was rolling off the top of the liquid, and Hermione put it in her hands and took a small sip.

"So, let me get this straight. Since my first year, you thought I was related to Mione, but never found the courage to ask me about it? Something always came up, and you never got around to doing it?"

"Obviously."

"Well, courage isn't usually found in Slytherins, I guess. Now, is it?"

"Don't get cheeky," he said darkly.

"Sorry," she said, grinning. "Now, when you saw me that first day of Potions in my third year, you knew that Mione and I were one in the same?"

"Yes. I didn't know how until Minerva told me you'd had that blasted Time-Turner all year. Then I realized that you would be going back in time during your seventh year. For a while, I thought you still had it, but if you gave it to Minerva to give back to the Ministry, then I knew there was no way you gave her a fake. So, it was a waiting game from then on."

"How... how did you feel when you knew the insufferable know-it-all would end up being the person you... fell in love with?" she asked nervously.

"It was all rather strange. Although you did annoy me when you were younger, I never doubted your ability. I was very impressed with you. Of course, you were naïve; book smarts only gets you so far, but I was still impressed. Only when you arrived during your third year, and after finding out about the Time-Turner, did my feelings for you get all jumbled up. I was your professor, and remembering the stuff I did to you back then, and seeing you sit in front of me day after day, well--let's just say I had several stomach aches that year. You were a minor, and my student, and quite honestly it was horrifying to be around you."

"I'm sorry I made you sick to your stomach."

"It wasn't that. Don't you listen? It was wrong of me to even think of you in that context. It was very difficult to push my feelings for you to the side and just treat you like everyone else."

"Is that why you were so cruel to me when I got hit with that curse that made my teeth grow? Because that was very hurtful. I was already self-conscious about them as it was, and to have a professor be so mean about it, especially one that I highly respected... well, you made me cry!"

Severus reached across the small table and placed his hand over hers. "I'm sorry for any pain I have given you, but yes, I had to treat you like I would have any other person. Believe me when I say that it killed me to not help you with that situation."

Hermione wiped a small tear from her face, and he removed his hand.

"So, after that happened, and you returned, with teeth that properly fit your mouth, there was no denying that you were my long lost love. And every year you became more and more beautiful."

"Thank you," she said shyly.

"Then, the Dark Lord returned, and I had to go back into his service."

"Are you going to show me?"

"Watching me get punished when I was younger is nothing compared to watching me murder people. Can you handle that?"

Hermione looked appalled. "Murder?"

"That's what Death Eaters do best, my dear," he said in a sinister way. "But because his return had nothing to do with you, I will spare you. However, you do need to know that I am a killer, and the only reason I'm telling you that is because you were the reason I joined him in the first place."

"Don't blame me entirely for that!" she yelled.

"I don't, but you were the driving force. It was my mistake for believing in Lucius and joining the Dark Lord, but Hermione--it was because I wanted to find you, and that is the *only* reason I joined. I could have continued my education, but you were more important."

"You were obsessed with me!" she cried.

"OF COURSE I WAS!" he screamed while slamming his fist on the small table, rattling the cups and saucers and startling Hermione. "You were my whole world! Was I not yours?"

"Yes."

"And would you have done *anything* to find me?"

She looked down in her lap, away from his hard gaze.

"Think about it. If I suddenly disappeared right now in front of with no explanation--nothing--what would you have done?"

She looked up and into his black eyes. "Anything."

"Would you join a person with amazing powers who could help you, even if you knew it probably wasn't a good idea, but that it was your last resort?"

She slowly nodded her head. "Yes."

"Exactly," he said exasperatedly. "Now, back to my point. I wanted you to know who I have become: a sinister bastard."

"How many have you killed?" she asked, ignoring what he was saying. She wanted answers.

"Enough."

"Do you feel... remorse?"

"Only for the innocent. The others? No. I'd do it again in a heartbeat."

"I see," she said. Thoughts of him killing were swirling inside her mind.

"May I continue my story?" he asked.

She slowly nodded her head.

"So, when the Dark Lord returned, I started keeping closer tabs on you. I knew how you and your friends disregarded the rules, and I was sure you would find yourselves in trouble."

"What did you do?"

"I had some of the portraits watch for you. They would let me know where you were located, what you were doing, and who you were doing it with. Oh, and by the way, seeing you in the arms of that big-headed Bulgarian Quidditch player really pissed me off. But as you didn't know what was going to happen in your near future, I held my tongue. Of course, the roses around the castle that night took the brunt of my pain."

"You were jealous?" she said.

"Of course I was--you're mine!" he bellowed.

She giggled. "Well, I'm sure you've had your fair share of women."

He looked at her intently. "I've only been with you. Like I said, I've never wanted or lusted after anyone else."

Hermione swallowed hard, but she secretly was happy that nobody had touched her lover.

"As I was saying, I watched you. And it's a good thing I did, too. Do you know how proud, yet angry I was at you for doing what you did during your fifth year? You nearly gave me a heart attack. When I saw you in the office being held by that bitch, Umbridge, I could have killed her right then and there... oh, and then you went traipsing off to the Ministry alone! I was so furious and worried about you."

"But you must have known nothing was going to happen to me--since I survived long enough to make it to my seventh year."

"I knew that, Hermione. What I didn't know was if you were going to be harmed--you know, hurt, bleeding, broken, raped! I knew you weren't going to die, but there are worse things that could have happened to you!"

"I didn't think about that."

"Of course not. You're still naïve when it comes to stuff like that."

"So you were worried sick about me?" she said, taking another sip.

"Yes. Then Black died and, of course, Potter blamed me, so I figured you blamed me, too. That was a horrible summer. But then when you came back to school and treated me no differently, I figured you had used those brains and deduced that it was not my fault that Black passed on."

"Of course not. I warned Harry that the image in his mind was probably false, but he's so stubborn. And what you didn't know was that I was crushing on you that entire time. It's so ironic," she said.

"Indeed."

"When did you decide to make that potion for Harry?"

"After Draco was recruited to try to kill Dumbledore during your sixth year. We knew that if the Dark Lord's reach could go that deep, it was time to finish the war--even though Potter was still young and in school. That year I spent researching the Dark magic needed and finally found what I was looking for. I mentioned to Dumbledore that I needed your assistance, and he obliged."

"And that's when you decided to try to make me see another side of you?"

"Yes."

"I want to see that summer again. There are a few things I want you to see. Can you show me how to pull my memory so we can view it?" she said.

Severus was a little stunned. He had not expected her to want to show him anything.

"Just hold the tip of your wand to your temple and give the memory a beginning and an ending in your mind. Once you've gathered everything in your mind, slowly pull the wand away. It will automatically retrieve it. There you go--that's it--now push the silvery wisp into the Pensieve. Very good."

After Hermione finished pulling her memories, they both tipped their faces down into the basin for the third time. They were standing in Hermione's bedroom at Grimmauld Place. The younger Snape was standing by her bed looking at the younger Hermione in the doorway.

"Professor, what are you doing here?" She closed the door behind her.

"Sorry for coming into your private room, Miss Granger, but I need to ask you something."

"Yes, sir?" she said with a look of concern on her face.

"I have been asked to make a potion that will help Potter use an Unforgivable Curse while keeping his precious soul intact. The Headmaster seems to think that Potter doesn't have the strength to cast one--"

"But what about Priori Incantatem?"

"I didn't say he would use the curses on Voldemort. There are other people who are trying to kill him as well, and sometimes 'Expelliarmus' isn't good enough."

"I see. So what do you need me for?"

"I would like your help. The potion is very dangerous and takes two months to brew; if I should happen to... have to leave... during the middle of it, I would not be able to complete the process. I would like you to assist me and take over if and when I have to depart."

"You were trying to hide the fact that you were a Death Eater right there, but I already knew," she whispered to Severus.

"Correct."

"You... want me to help you, sir?" she said, surprised.

"Why not? You are beyond capable; I would not trust this potion with anyone else."

"I... thank you. Yes, I will help, I'm honored, but I do have to say, I'm in shock; I thought I was a pebble in your shoe."

He walked over to her in a few steps and was an arm's length away now. "You have never been that, I assure you," he said. Then the snarl that he usually had on his face turned upside down into a small grin.

"I almost melted when you smiled and told me that," she said.

"Now that I'm seeing this from your point of view, I can tell. I thought you were just trying not to pass out from seeing me do that."

The memory faded to another scene. They were now in a lab.

"This is a special potion that we are going to be brewing, Miss Granger. It requires the best of the best equipment, not the basics that you are used to using in class. I will provide everything needed, but I must impress how valuable and priceless some of my personal collection is."

"Yes, sir. I will be very careful with anything you let me borrow."

"I know. That's another reason I chose you to assist me."

Snape pulled off a white sheet that had been covering the lab table.

"As you can see, we are going to use a gold cauldron; it will help keep the potion from overheating. These glass bottles are hand blown; they are very delicate, yet will hold the hottest liquid without cracking." He walked down the table and continued showing her the different items.

"And this," he said while picking up a long stirring stick, "is my most prized possession." He looked directly into her eyes. "Someone very special gave me this. Pewter stirring sticks can last a life time if they are well taken care of. I trust you will handle this with the utmost care." He handed her the stick, and she ran her fingers along the inscription: Severus Snape.

"Yes, sir, you can count on me to take care of this." She placed it back on the lab table and looked up at him; he was smiling.

"When I was in the past, and bought that, I didn't realize that I had seen it before until you told me you would cherish it forever... that's when I knew that I was the special person who gave that to you!" she said.

"That's why I showed it to you. I was hoping that when you returned you would remember me saying that and know that I was talking about you."

She smiled at him and another memory rolled in.

"Good evening, Miss Granger. Are you ready?"

"Good evening, Professor. Yes, I did everything you asked. I went to town and bought everything on your list. I also took the liberty of buying some new books that I found at Flourish and Blotts. I hope you don't mind--it's just to keep busy while the potion brews."

He smirked at her. "I expect nothing less from you, Miss Granger."

He reached into his robes and pulled a small box out of a pocket. "I have something for you." He handed her the box, and she slowly opened it. Inside were two silver hair clips.

"It's a safety precaution--your hair tends to get out of hand, and we cannot have this potion contaminated."

"Thank you. But they look so antique; I wouldn't want to ruin them."

"You won't."

Hermione pulled them from the box and clipped her hair away from her face; he watched her the entire time.

"And those! We found them one time in the Room of Requirement--how did you get them after I disappeared?"

"Lily brought all your belongings to me, and we went through them together. These were in a small box next to the headband that I bought you. I, of course, kept them, and that was the perfect time to see you wearing them again."

"Oh, Severus. You sneaky Slytherin."

"Indeed."

Once again, the memory shifted and the younger Hermione was leaning over the table cutting up herbs.

"Chop the roots finely. Slow down. Here let me show you!" He was being his usual strict self. He placed his hand over hers and guided her on how to properly cut the roots the way he wanted.

Hermione was extremely nervous; he never touched her, or anyone else, when teaching. She hoped he wouldn't notice, but he had. He quickly pulled away from her hand and handed her the knife.

"I shouldn't have touched you then, but do you remember that time I had you help with that potion for Poppy?"

"Yes. Believe me, I remembered this summer several times when I was in the past. There were so many different incidences that reminded me of our time together."

"That's how you do it."

"Yes, sir."

"At the time, I could tell you were tense, and I remember wondering why. You were a secretive spy, and I didn't know what I could have done to make you so nervous."

The older Severus smirked at her.

"How's this, Professor?" She showed him the newly chopped roots.

He quickly glanced at them. "Much better, thank you."

The memory faded and another took its place.

"Professor! You're back!"

"Indeed. How has the potion been going?"

"Very well, no problems with it, but I'm another story," she said.

"How do you mean?"

"You've been gone for almost a week; I've been stuck in this room, almost going stir crazy, and I need a break. I mean don't take it that I'm not excited that you are safely back, because I am; I just need a break."

"I can tell. You start rambling when you get exhausted."

"Oh, I'm sorry."

"It's okay, I've had those days. In fact, I had a similar week--stuck somewhere where I did not want to be."

"With the Dark Lord?" she said quietly.

He looked up at her, calculating.

"I'm not stupid, Professor. I know you're a Death Eater."

"I never said you were. How long have you known?"

"Since the end of my fourth year."

"Really? And that doesn't bother you?"

"I was very surprised that you knew who I was," he whispered to her.

"Why. Did you think I would be afraid of you?"

"Yes. And you probably should have been."

"Nope. I know where your loyalties lie. What bothers me most is knowing that you may be summoned one day and never return." Before she turned around, she saw his eyebrow shoot up.

"You just heard my explanation of why I wasn't scared of you. It was the truth."

"Well, since you know where I was, then you will understand that I, too, need a break. The potion will be fine for now; we need a break."

"Okay."

He walked up behind her and handed her two tickets to a play in Muggle London.

She looked up at him.

"We both need to clear our heads."

"Thank you, I can't wait--but, sir, is this appropriate?"

"Do you think this Death Eater gives a damn?" He smirked. "Besides, I already informed Dumbledore what I was going to do two weeks ago, and he had no problems with it."

"You were speechless," he said while looking at the shocked younger Hermione.

"Of course I was. You had planed that before you were summoned! AND you were making a joke--about being a Death Eater no less!"

He started chuckling as the scene changed.

The potion was brewing, and Hermione was trying to read one of the new books she had bought, but her attention kept drifting over to what Snape was doing. He was flipping the pages in another book that she had bought, but she could tell he wasn't reading it.

"Yes, Miss Granger?"

"Nothing, sir."

"I know something's on your mind; you can't hide that from me."

"Well, it's just--really quiet in here."

"I figured you would enjoy that. Silence is bliss."

"Well usually, yes, I don't mind, but... never mind."

"Go on. I'm listening."

"Well, I don't know... I was just wondering..."

"About my time as a Death Eater?"

"Um, yes, and other things."

"Why do you care? Besides being a nosy little girl."

Hermione grunted when the younger Severus insulted her.

"Well, you were," he said innocently.

"You're right, I'm sorry, it's none of my business." She looked down at her book. She could feel him eyeing her still.

"Anything we say or do will not leave this room, understand?"

She looked back at him. He had closed the book and placed it in his lap.

"Yes, sir."

"I joined them shortly after I graduated from Hogwarts. I wasn't going to, but something happened in my seventh year that changed my mind.

"Then, when I found out that he was going to kill Potter and Lily, I warned Dumbledore. After he killed them, I realized the mistake I made and vowed to bring him down. So, I was hired as the Potions master."

She wasn't expecting him to open up like he did, he was such a private man, but she listened closely.

"May I ask what changed your mind about joining him?"

"You may, and I will tell you one day, I promise, but not today. Just know that something was taken away from me, and I wasn't too happy about it."

"See. I've never lied to you about anything. Even then, I was telling you the truth," he said.

"I know. Well, I have that answer now. It was me."

"I'm surprised you're telling me this to begin with. I know how you value your privacy, but thank you."

"I have a reason. But again, I will tell you one day."

A smile came across his face; then he continued, "All will be revealed after the war, and right now it's not safe to know all answers."

"Yes, sir. From what Harry tells me, you hated his father, Sirius, and Professor Lupin."

"Hate is a strong word. But at first, yes I did hate them. However, during my seventh year, it diminished to more like a strong dislike for them. The relationship could be described like the one between Mister Malfoy and Potter."

"I see. Harry doesn't hate Draco, but he doesn't like him either."

"Exactly. Remus is a different story though. He was a bit more... manageable than Potter and Black."

"Is that why you brew the Wolfsbane potion for him?"

"Yes. He doesn't deserve the life that was given him. Although I don't hold him completely blameless for things either. So, enough about me for right now. What about you, Miss Granger? What are you planning after your seventh year?"

"Oh. Well, I would like to apprentice in something, I'm not sure what yet. Maybe continue my education at a Muggle university. Actually I haven't given it much thought because of this war."

"Whatever you decide, I'm sure you will be more than adequate."

She blushed.

"Time to check our potion." He rose out of his chair and walked to the lab table.

The scene changed again.

"AHHHHHH!" she screamed.

"Shite!" Snape snatched Hermione away after the cauldron exploded, trying to see her extent of her injuries.

"Don't worry about me... the potion, is it ruined? Check it first!" she screamed.

"Fuck the potion, you're more important! Where does it hurt?"

"My right arm--it's burning!"

"Let me see. Move your hand."

Hermione moved the hand that was holding her shoulder. Snape gripped the collar of her shirt and ripped the long sleeve straight off of her. He tossed it to the ground and dragged her over to one of his cabinets. He retrieved some lotion from his cabinet and took a scoop into his hands. He then rubbed the balm onto her shoulder, massaging it ever so gently. "How does that feel?"

"You made me feel better that first day we met. Remember?" she asked him.

"You mean when Black knocked me onto you, and I ended up bruising your ribs?"

"Yes."

"Much better, thank you; I'm sorry I screwed that up."

"You did no such thing. It slipped my mind that you haven't learned that mixing the nails of Dragons with something so delicate as the wings of fairies would cause it to explode. I apologize." He was still rubbing her arm and shoulder, even though most of the lotion was gone.

"I'm sorry, did I ruin the potion?"

"No, it's not ruined. It was supposed to do that. The explosion gives it a shock, taking it to the next level. I just failed to warn you. That will never happen again."

"Hmm... twenty-five points from Slytherin for such an obvious mistake, Professor." She smirked.

He had stopped rubbing her arm and looked into her eyes, astonished; he was not expecting her to say that. He started laughing.

"I loved seeing you laugh," she said bashfully.

Snape grinned.

Her memory shifted again.

"Time to transport the liquid to the glass phials. Take your robe off--here take mine as well, we don't need our sleeves getting caught in the liquid." She watched him shove off his heavy robes. She took it, along with hers, over to the chair and laid them down.

Silently they started ladling the potion into the phials. Then Snape dropped the ladle, grabbed his left arm and hissed in pain.

"PROFESSOR!" Hermione dropped her own ladle and ran over to him.

"It's okay, I have to go."

"Again? For how long?"

"I'm not sure. Keep putting the potion in the phials, then let them cool. After it cools, add a teaspoon of Venomous Tentacula poison and be careful!"

"You be careful, Professor!"

He fled the room, leaving Hermione alone looking terrified.

"I guess I know how you felt when I went to the Ministry at the end of fifth year. I had a sick feeling in my stomach after you left. I knew you weren't going to be okay, and when you stumbled back into the lab three hours later... my fears were confirmed," she said softly.

"Mione..."

"PROFESSOR!" She ran over to him and grasped him by the shoulders; he fell to his knees.

"Professor, let me get you some help!"

"No! I need you to do it. I can't make it to Hogwarts right now. In my cabinet... there are potions... get them," he said breathlessly.

She ran over to the cabinet and pulled all of the bottles out, not sure which one he would want. He had slumped against the wall with his eyes closed. She quickly uncorked the phials and started putting them to his lips. With much effort, he slowly drank them. After a few moments, Hermione pulled away some of his black hair that was matted on his face.

"Professor, how are you feeling?"

He opened his eyes, "Better now. I'm going to have to do some healing charms on myself, but I can manage."

"Can you stand?"

"Not yet. How's the potion?"

"Still cooling." She stood up and walked over to the sink, wetting a small towel, then walked back over to him and kneeled down. She wiped at the blood that had dried on his lip. He closed his eyes as Hermione washed his face. "Are you going to tell me what happened?" she whispered.

"When you started doing that for me, all the pain that I had disappeared; I was just so happy to have you actually touch me with caring hands again. And since I'm looking in your memory, I can see by the expression on your face that you really did care about my pain."

"Yes, I did. Very much so. I wanted to do anything to help you."

"The Cruciatus Curse, among other things."

"Why?"

"For his amusement."

"But aren't you his right hand man or something?"

"Close. But it doesn't matter. We are all available for his enjoyment."

"I'm sorry." She finished wiping the blood from his face and sat there staring at him.

"Thank you for helping me Mio--Miss Granger."

"You called me Mione earlier, sir. You can continue... I don't mind."

"Thank you. But you are not of age yet--I just slipped."

"I will be in a little over two weeks," she huffed.

"Until then, Miss Granger. We need to finish the potion. School will be starting soon."

"Yes, sir." She helped him to his feet and they continued to work on the potion in silence.

The memory changed once again.

"All right. It's complete," Snape said while looking down at the cauldron.

"Now what?" Hermione looked inside the pot. Where there once was a cauldron filled with liquid, there was now just enough to fill one phial.

"Well, I have to bottle this, and when the time is right, Potter will drink it."

"I can't believe all that work--for so little."

"The potion may have simmered down to produce only enough for one drink, but I promise you, it is short of being 'little'. This potion is very powerful. Hand me that bottle."

Carefully he poured the potion into the glass phial and stored it in the cabinet. Then, together, they cleaned the lab. She gathered her belongings from the other room, ready to finally leave.

"I know I haven't told you where we were, but it was for your safety that you didn't know."

"Are you going to tell me now?"

"Yes, we are in the basement of Grimmauld Place."

"We are? Then why didn't you tell me?" she asked.

"If Potter or Weasley knew you were down here, they would have tried interrupting you throughout the day. Besides, Potter doesn't know what we were brewing. He and

Weasley just knew that you were needed for a special assignment."

"Well, the fact that I could have gone upstairs for a simple break would have been nice. However, I am in absolute agreement that the boys would have disturbed me."

"So, you aren't upset?"

"No. I trust your judgment, and you were right. It wouldn't have been safe."

Severus walked over to the door and removed some of the wards he had placed around the entry so she couldn't leave and opened it. He stood to the side so she could walk past him.

But she stopped in front of him. "Thank you for everything. I appreciate your confidence in me."

He smiled down at her and placed his hand on her shoulder. "I'll see you in class next week. Go on, you've spent the past two months with me; your friends are itching to see you."

"I didn't want you to leave. I admit that I was pretty upset after you left that day," he said.

"So was I. I always knew you had a different side and that you usually put up a front at Hogwarts and around others... I just knew it! After I left, I didn't go see Harry and Ron."

This time, when the memory finished changing, they were back inside Hermione's room at Grimmauld Place.

The younger Hermione threw her belonging across the room and flopped down in the bed, burying her face in the pillows and kicking her legs on the bed.

"What are you doing?"

"I'm crying, you fool! Just watch!"

"You need to stop loving him, you stupid girl! He will never love you back--he's twice your age!" she screamed into her pillow. Although her voice was muffled, she could still be heard.

"You're just an annoying student! He was only nice to you because he probably was forced by Dumbledore! ERROR! THIS ISN'T FAIR!"

Suddenly, the crying girl rolled over on her back and sat up. She removed the two clips from her hair, placing them in the palms of her hands, and looked down at them.

"Severus Snape--if you only knew how much I love you. You may call it a school girl crush, but it's not. You're passionate, trustworthy, knowledgeable, a real man--not a boy; you're everything I want. I just wish you could see that."

She placed the clips on the side table and then fell back on the bed, placing her hands inside her pockets. She looked off into the distance as if she were remembering something.

"Maybe he knows... I don't think he would compliment just anyone... Did I give him enough hints? Probably not... I don't even know how to flirt! Oh, what am I thinking? This is not the time to flirt with anyone. A war is going on, Mione Jean! Stop fretting over him!"

She rolled off the bed, wiped the tears from her eyes, and stormed out of the door.

Hermione felt herself leaving the Pensieve. She saw a surprised look on his face.

"You called yourself Mione Jean?"

"Yes. Mione was a nickname that my friends used occasionally. I think that is why the Room of Requirement had me use that name--it was easy for me to remember."

"You went back and cried for me? I... I... had no idea."

"Of course you wouldn't. It was private."

*"I know that... I mean I had no idea that your feelings were *that* strong. I knew you respected me and could actually stand to touch and be around me. I only hoped that it was more... and it was." He was scanning her eyes, trying to see the depths of her soul. He was touched that she shared that summer through her own eyes.*

"I told you I loved you before I went back to the past."

They sat there looking at each other for a while, not knowing what else to say.

Finally his voice came to him. "When we returned to Hogwarts, I knew this was the year I had been waiting for. I actually started following you around the school whenever I had the time."

"You did? I never noticed."

"I am--was--the best spy of all time," he gloated.

"How silly of me. Of course," she replied.

"It was a good thing, too, because a few days after school started, I realized something after following you one night. You went to an empty classroom, one that I've known you to go into before, to get some peace and quiet. I followed you into the room."

"How?"

"I don't need a cloak to be invisible. I am the only person who has been trained by the two most powerful wizards in the world. I can do things that others can not.

"As I was saying, I overheard you that night. Here, let me just show you."

He pulled another memory from his mind, and they both fell into the basin.

Hermione was pacing back and forth in an old classroom. It had a few chairs and tables and a broken chalkboard and had cobwebs draping in all the corners.

"I wish I could go back in time and warn people about their futures--especially the Potters! I wish I still had my Time-Turner--no, I don't! It would just create a paradox...you remember what McGonagall told you about messing with time. Oh, but I would be discreet and so careful!"

She kicked an old desk with her toe.

The memory faded and she was lifted out of the Pensieve again.

"That was quick. Did you really need to show me that again? I remember that day clearly. That was when Harry had had another horrible vision from Voldemort, and I was so upset that there was nothing I could do for him. So I went to that room and started shouting out my feelings about wanting to change things. I was just venting!"

"Yes, that is the point of this entire story! Don't you see? You thought that if you went back in time and warned people, that it would create a paradox. But you were wrong. If you hadn't gone back in time, then it *would* have created a paradox!"

"I don't follow you."

"At that moment, I was the only person who knew that you were going to go back in time. It was up ~~to me~~ to send you there--how else could you have obtained a Time-Turner? I was the one who had to make sure it was given to you--"

"IT WAS YOU! You sent me that anonymous gift with the Time-Turner in it?"

"Yes! I knew you wouldn't be able to resist using it!"

"HOW DID YOU GET ONE?"

"I did have power over certain people. I made Wormtail change into his rat form, sneak into the Ministry with a false Time-Turner and exchange it for a real one. I told him it was going to be useful for the Dark Lord... He was so gullible."

Hermione's mouth was slack. She couldn't believe that Severus was the one who had sent her the Time-Turner.

"I knew that if you didn't go back in time, everything would get messed up. Your presence had a huge effect on the outcome of things. If you had never warned Black about keeping his Animagus identity a secret, he would have registered. He then would never have been able to escape from Azkaban; we would never have known the truth about Wormtail; Potter would never have known that Black was his godfather; and he would never have gone to the Ministry trying to help him. Without that happening, the Ministry would still not believe Dumbledore that the Dark Lord was back!

"If you hadn't gone back in time and disappeared on me like that, I surely would have gone truly bad. But your love made me loyal... even to Potter and Lily. I would never have gone into his service; I would never have warned Dumbledore about the Dark Lord's plans about going after Potter and Lily. I would have never been loyal to him--thus Dumbledore would have lost his most useful weapon in the war!"

"But James and Lily still died and so did Sirius!"

"Because that was their destiny! No matter what you could have done, the Dark Lord was already going after them. It was when I overheard a prophecy that he chose to kill their boy. And I couldn't let that happen--for your sake. I tried to prevent it. If I hadn't had you in my life all those years ago, I wouldn't have given a damn if he killed Potter's kid!

"You set off different events--can't you understand that? I knew you wouldn't be able to tell anyone about the future because the Time-Turner would prevent you, so it was actually safe for you to go back in time."

Hermione was thinking about how her time in the past impacted the future while she fiddled with her now cold cup of hot chocolate.

"This is just... wow... I don't really know what to make of all this."

"It takes some getting used to. But now, here we are. We both know what happened, how it affected the future, and we have some more insight on time travel; apparently, you can't go back in time with the intent to change it, and if you do, it launches you into the future."

"But I wasn't even wearing the Time-Turner that day I disappeared."

"Well, it's magic. It must have registered that you were going to attempt to tell me the truth, and it appeared around your neck again, taking you back to your own time. We also can deduce that for each month you were in the past, it was only one day for us, hence you've really only been gone for seven days--not seven months."

"Yep." She took a deep breath. "Now what happens?"

Snape turned from her eyes and stood up and walked over to the edge of the hill, where he looked out over the landscape. The sun was starting to set, and the air was getting colder. "I want to know how... how you feel about me?" he said faintly while looking over his shoulder.

Hermione walked over to him; he turned around and faced her.

Here it comes. The reason why she can't be with me.

Instead of saying anything to him, Hermione started unbuttoning the collar of his shirt, and before he could speak, she reached inside and grasped the silver chain that was hanging from his neck and yanked on it, breaking the clasp. She looked up into his black eyes as she slid the ring off the necklace and held it up in the tips of her fingers.

"This belongs on my finger, not your neck... if you still want me."

"If I still want you? Haven't you been listening to my story, woman? I've gone to hell and back looking for you!"

Hermione was smiling as she slipped the ring back on her finger. "I love you, Severus, I always will. But I guess we should keep this quiet until I graduate... I don't want you to get in any trouble for marrying a student."

"Oh, didn't I say? Dumbledore has already given me his blessing to be with you... He figured out what happened and knows that I love you."

"You could have said something earlier!" She tried to smack him on the arm, but his reflexes were quick and he grabbed her wrist, then pulled her into his body and dipped her backwards where he kissed her deeply and passionately.

He pulled her back up after a moment and put his finger under her chin, softly bringing it upwards to look him in the eyes. "I've waited nearly twenty years to do that again. I've missed you so much and I will *never* lose you again. I love you, Mione"

"I love you more."

"As much as I want to stay here in your arms for the rest of the night, it's getting too cold, and we have some more explaining to do. Potter and Weasley are going to flip when they hear that you love me and we are going to get married."

"I know. How are we going to do this?"

"Tell them?"

"No, I mean, you still are my professor, and it's only October; so I have a while before I can finish school."

"Well, I'll have to talk with Dumbledore, but seeing how you have already done your seventh year--only twenty years ago. I wonder if they will count that. In that case, all you would have to do is sit your N.E.W.T.s. We'll talk to him about his later."

"Okay." She stood on her tippy toes and leaned in for one more kiss from him. For both, being in each other's arms again was paradise. After holding onto each other for a bit longer, they pulled apart and walked back over to the café table, hand in hand. He charmed the Pensieve to fit back into his pocket and made the chairs and table disappear. They carefully hiked back down to the boat and sailed across the Black Lake.

"So, everything worked out for us, after all!" Hermione said happily.

Snape's grin faded.

"What?" she asked.

"Did Potter and Weasley not tell you?"

"Tell me what? Voldemort is dead, we are together now. What's wrong?"

Severus breathed deeply before continuing.

"Lucius, Bellatrix and Rodolphus weren't captured. They are still out there, and until they are caught, I'm in danger. I betrayed them. This means that you will be in danger, too."

"WHAT? I thought all of this was over!"

"Not yet, my love."

Hermione started to panic. "They'll take you away from me! I just know it!"

"Listen to me," he pulled her into his lap and held her tightly, "they are highly wanted. The Ministry will find them; they can't get to me at Hogwarts, or you. I will not let that ruin the one thing I have wanted since I fell in love with you. We will live our life, we will marry, we will be happy--but we will also have to watch our backs. I thought you already knew they were still on the run."

"I didn't know! The boys didn't tell me! I don't want to live a life where I'm always looking over my shoulder!"

"Well, we don't really have a choice. Until they are brought in, we can't let our guard down. I'm sorry. Are you having second thoughts about being with me now?"

"Never!" She wrapped her arms around his neck and buried her face in his skin. "Okay, we'll just have to be careful--but if you die on me, I will be right behind you. I'm not living without you!"

He pushed her up and looked into her eyes, sighing. He pushed away some of her unruly hair with his long finger and dabbed a tear that was rolling down her cheek. "And I will not live without you again either. But just make sure I am truly dead before you kill yourself... We don't need a Romeo and Juliet story on our hands."

She laughed.

"Shakespeare, hmm?"

"I'm a half-blood. I *do* know who he was."

She gave him a soft kiss as the boat guided itself into the boathouse.

Chapter 9

Chapter 9 of 9

Hermione accidentally, on purpose, uses a Time-Turner. What happens when she travels back to the Marauder era? What will become of her future? Travel with her as she embarks on a journey that no one, especially Severus Snape, will forget.

A/N: Hello there. I just wanted to thank you for sticking with the story and leaving some great reviews. When I first started posting this fic, I had a different ending in mind, but then my good friend, Lulabelle72, and I had a chat and I have changed the ending and decided to make a sequel with the original ending. So, instead of twelve chapters as I had planned, we have nine in this story. This is it, folks. I hope you enjoy! But don't worry--there WILL be another story using the old ending, so you won't be missing out much, but you will have to wait a bit because my next fic to be posted is a very dark fic, and I have to finish that first. Again, thanks to Lariope for all her wonderful advice and beta work, but mostly for her support of this story. Thank you, my dear. Now, on with the ending!

Hermione and Severus went directly to Dumbledore's Office that evening, ready to give some explanations. It took a while to gather the people Hermione wanted to talk to, so she and Severus ate a small dinner while they waited. Harry and Ron were the first ones in the room, followed by Remus. Molly and Arthur showed up with the twins and Ginny. Mad-Eye, Tonks and Kingsley took the longest, since they were coming from the Ministry. Each Head of House was already in the room when Madam Pomfrey finally came through the door.

"I've gathered you all here because each of you knows that Hermione was in the past, and there are some things that she needs to reveal. I ask each of you to listen with an opened mind and know that I approve of everything they are going to tell you," Dumbledore said to the small crowd that was sitting in chairs in front of his desk. "Severus, would you like to start?"

"Actually, I will, Professor," Hermione said. She walked in the front of the group and sat down in a chair that faced her audience; Severus took a seat next to her.

"A few weeks ago, I received an anonymous package. It had a Time-Turner in it. I checked it for traps and spells and found nothing, so I used it. My intent was to go back in time and warn the Potters... and even you, Remus, of your future. I know this was stupid and foolish, but I was so upset about this whole war that I did it. Anyway, it turns out that Professor Snape was the one who gave me the Time-Turner. He did it because he knew of something--something that was meant to happen, and he made sure I went back into the past."

She looked at everyone, seeing if they were following along, and they were all very quiet, listening deeply.

"I'm not going to go into all the details; it's too long of a story, but I went back to September of 1976. I used the Room of Requirement to get all the necessary items I needed to be a transfer student from Beauxbatons. You see, the Time-Turner stopped working. As soon as I arrived, I tried to leave, realizing the mistake I had made, but it wouldn't let me, so I had to continue with this new life. I ended up befriending four wonderful people: James Potter, Sirius Black, Lily Evans and Remus Lupin. I pretty much ignored Peter Pettigrew."

Hermione noticed Harry shifting in his seat and Ron looking uncomfortable.

"I noticed that," Remus said from the audience.

She smiled at him. "I kept the Time-Turner around my neck because I was afraid it would fall into the wrong hands. On several occasions, I tried to tell my friends about something in their future. When I did, the Time-Turner activated, and I would speed up in time, which would cause me to be dizzy and sick. It was like it didn't want me saying anything and was warning me that if I continued I would go further into time. Do you remember when I became very ill, Remus?"

"Yes, and if I recall correctly we were talking about what I was going to do after I left Hogwarts."

"Exactly. I tried to tell you that you were going to make a good D.A.D.A. teacher. But I went forward in time and got sick. Then, when I was back in the dorm, I tested it on Lily and deliberately tried to warn her about something, and that's when my body rejected the sudden time travel, and I became even more ill.

"So anyway, that's when I knew I couldn't say anything... deliberately. There were several times that something just slipped out--like when I told James and Sirius that they couldn't register themselves as Animagi, because if they had, then Sirius would never have been able to escape from Azkaban."

"Interesting," said Arthur.

"So what does this have to do with Snape?" Harry said with a bit of tension in his voice. "I know he went to school with my parents, and I know you couldn't avoid him."

"No, I didn't avoid him. In fact, I ended up... falling in love with him."

"WHAT?"

"Merlin's Beard!"

"BLOODY HELL!"

"Everyone calm down. Let her speak," Dumbledore said loudly.

Harry looked like he could shoot fire at any minute, and Ron looked as if he were holding back vomit in his mouth, yet she continued on.

"I found him intriguing, and I perused him. We fell in love and even were engaged to marry. I didn't know how long I was going to be in the past, so I lived my life like I normally would have. But after considerable thinking, I knew that I didn't belong there, and I needed to tell Severus the truth about who I was."

"She called him Severus. Someone please pinch me; I think I'm dreaming," Ron whispered to no one in particular.

Molly was sitting behind him and smacked him in the back of the head. "Shh... I want to hear this!"

"What about the Time-Turner? I thought it wouldn't let you speak of the future," Tonks said.

"Well, I took it off and put it under my mattress. Then I told Severus to meet me on the Astronomy tower. I thought without wearing it, I could say something, so I took a huge breath and told him the entire truth. But it was too late... I was already going through time, and it wasn't stopping. Next thing I knew, I ended up back in my own time. The Time-Turner somehow appeared around my neck when I intentionally went to tell him the entire truth. I disappeared into thin air right before his eyes."

"Oh dear! How horrible that must have been for a young man!" Molly exclaimed.

"So, that's what happened. He thought you were going to break his heart, but you just Disapparated instead. He was a wreck... we all were. Those last two months were horrible; we searched high and low for you," Remus said.

"Indeed," Severus said, finally breaking his silence.

"When did you figure out that Hermione was the same person you went to school with?" Remus asked him.

"I had thought that perhaps she was related to Mione Jean, but by her third year, I knew it was her. Especially after Minerva told me that Hermione had been using a Time-Turner that year."

"I can't imagine how difficult that was for you--waiting for her to grow up," Minerva said.

"It made me sick to treat her like... everyone else and not to think of her in a manner that was inappropriate. Yes, it was very difficult, but I had other things to distract me, especially when the Dark Lord returned," he said, looking more at Harry than anyone else.

"So, where's the problem?" Molly said through her motherly tears.

"There is no problem unless you create one," Dumbledore said, eyeing Harry and Ron.

"Severus and Hermione are going to continue their life together; in fact... by the looks of that ring that she's trying to hide, they still plan on getting married. And I am very happy that they are."

Hermione's face flushed.

Then Severus said, "Thank you, Headmaster. Yes, we do plan on getting married soon. But as you can probably deduce, there are certain problems--"

"Yeah, there are! She's still in school!" shouted Ron.

"There's that, Mister Weasley, but also Lucius, Bellatrix and Rodolphus. They are still going to be a threat to everyone, especially me and my soon-to-be wife."

"They are our number one priority, Severus," Kingsley said.

"I understand."

"Is this all you wanted to tell us?" Fred asked.

"Basically. Why?" Hermione said.

"Because we thought it was something really bad. But even though the thought that you are going to marry, and pardon my use of words, sir, the giant bat of the dungeons, is pretty shocking, we're happy for you," said George.

"Thanks, guys," Hermione said.

All eyes in the room turned to Harry and Ron. Hermione had a feeling that she had won the support of everyone in the room except her two best friends.

"What?" Ron said to the people staring at him.

"Say something, you guys, please," Hermione said.

Harry looked over to Ron, then back at Hermione. "Look, I don't know about Ron, but I'm not surprised. I think you two will be good for each other. I trust him... he won't hurt you. So, yeah, I'm happy for you... strange situation, though. All I want is a full account of what my parents were like."

Hermione was beaming.

"You're not surprised? I AM! Bloody hell, Hermione, he's twice your age!" Ron stood from his chair, pushing it to the ground.

Hermione's smile faded quickly. Her eyes turned from their usual chestnut brown to a deep chocolate with flecks of auburn; she was enraged. "I KNEW YOU WOULD ACT LIKE THIS, RONALD!"

"ACT LIKE WHAT, HERMIONE?"

Harry stood up between the two, "Come on, guys, calm down--"

"Like a prat!"

"Well, excuse me! I'm just a bit confused! Weren't you *my* girlfriend just a few weeks ago?"

"We broke up because we were better off as friends!"

"Yeah, and not even a month later you're engaged! And to Snape, no less!"

Harry turned to his best mate. "Ron, she went back in time. She might have been gone for good--"

"Shut up, Harry. I'm not going to listen to this anymore." Ron started to walk away, but someone came into his view.

"You'll be making the biggest mistake of your life if you walk away from her right now. She's your best friend, and your jealousy of me isn't worth losing her! And I will not have her upset over the loss of you; therefore, if you value any part of your life, you will turn around and be a man." Snape sneered as he blocked Ron's path.

"Are you threatening me?" Ron hissed through gritted teeth.

"You think you can stop me?" Snape said darkly.

Ron was silent, but gave him an ugly glare.

"I didn't think so. Turn around, Mister Weasley; don't make this mistake."

Ron huffed, tightened his jaw, and turned around. Everyone was staring at him; Hermione was still furious.

"Will you truly be happy with him *forever*?"

"Yes, Ronald, forever," she said strongly.

"I don't want to lose your friendship, but I do need some time to adjust. However, I will. For you."

A wave of relief passed through Hermione. "I appreciate that, Ron, more than you know. Thank you."

"Well, it's getting late. I think that's enough for tonight," Dumbledore said from the back of the room. "Miss Granger, I do want a word before you leave."

"Yes, sir."

On the way out, Madam Pomfrey gave Hermione a tight hug and smiled up at Severus.

The room cleared quickly, leaving Hermione and Severus alone with Dumbledore. He had pulled a small file out of his desk, sat down and opened it. "Well, I'm sure you're wondering what we are going to do about your education."

"We were hoping she could take her N.E.W.Ts."

"I think that would be a good idea. According to these records, you were about two months away from finishing your seventh year. I think you are more than capable of doing some independent study and completing your N.E.W.Ts before Christmas."

"Thank you, sir, but what about after the holidays?"

"Well, it's up to the two of you. You can stay here, join some classes you haven't had and be a kind of assistant to the teachers and myself, or Severus can take a leave of absence until the new term, and you two can do what you please."

Hermione looked toward Severus.

"I'm not sure it would be safe for us to be away from Hogwarts," he said.

"I think you would be fine; however, we would set the necessary precautions around you if you decided to leave. Think about it; just let me know before Christmas so I can make the necessary arrangements if need be."

"Thank you for being so accommodating to our situation, sir," Hermione said.

Dumbledore smiled at her and took a lemon drop from his candy bowl, winking at her in the process.

"We'll let you know," Snape said. He grabbed Hermione's hand and led her out of the office.

"Wow. What do you think?" she asked him as they descended the stairs.

"I need a vacation. So, if you don't mind, I would like to take the leave of absence."

"Really? I think I would love that, too," she said eagerly.

"I don't want to risk too much, so we'll go back to my home."

"Would it be possible to have the best of both worlds?"

"Meaning?"

"Maybe I could Floo back here every so often to see my friends and do some work for the teachers?"

"I think I could live with that. What do you want to do when the new term starts?"

"I still would like to continue my education... you don't mind if I go to a Muggle university, do you?"

"No, but there will be certain precautions if you are going to be away from me like that."

"Of course. So, when are you going to marry me?"

He stopped walking and looked at her. She was grinning, making his heart melt.

"As soon as you want."

"I've always wanted a Christmas wedding."

"Then it's decided. We'll marry after the students leave for the holiday."

The news of Hermione and Severus was heard by the entire school within days. It took until Halloween for the sniggering to stop each time he walked into his classroom. After handing out more detentions that month than he had over the past year, students stopped gabbing among themselves in his presence.

Hermione had a more difficult time adjusting to her peers. She was teased by the Slytherins and ridiculed by the Ravenclaws. Most of the Hufflepuffs ignored her, and the Gryffindors boldly questioned her. She was tired of explaining her situation to her classmates, but knew that it was easier for her to speak the truth about things, rather than have them speculate and spread rumors. It took Ron a while to start being the best friend whom she knew, but he came around and actually, genuinely told her that he was happy for her.

After things settled down, Harry approached her on Halloween night and asked for some time alone with her. During the feast, Harry took her to the Quidditch Stadium so they would have no interruptions.

"So, I'm sure you want to talk about your parents?" she asked him as they walked up the steep stairs to the top of the pitch.

"Yeah. I figured tonight would be appropriate since this was the night they were killed."

He sat down on a bench, and she sat next to him, pulling her robe tighter around her body.

"So, what do you want to know?" she asked.

"Everything. How they acted with each other, how they treated you, what kind of stuff my dad and Sirius did... I just want to know everything."

"Well, let's see--your mum was the first to befriend me; she was Head Girl. She was beautiful. She had long flowing hair, and her eyes... they were just like yours. I know you hear that all the time, but it's true, Harry. When she smiled, they had a glimmer in them... just like you.

"And your dad. Oh, what a pain... just like you! He and Sirius acted pretty much like you and Ron. Of course, with slight differences. They were very popular, and Sirius knew it. When I first met him, your mum introduced him as the ladies' man, and he was. I remember one night, he had snuck some Firewhisky from his mum and had a little much... well, he tried kissing on me, and let's just say... Severus saw."

"No way. What happened? Tell me!"

"They had a row. Severus started hitting him, and then when I tried pulling them apart, I fell and hit my head. I woke up in the hospital wing."

"Wow. So they really didn't get along."

"Well, at first, no. Sirius really did try to get Severus killed, and your dad really did save him. When I showed up, Severus made a rude comment about Gryffindors, which is just like him, and Sirius and your dad started dueling with him right in the Potions classroom. But after that, the hatred grew to something else. There are no words for the relationship they all had."

"Like a love-hate relationship?"

"Well, honestly, it's like you and Draco."

"I hate Draco."

"No, you don't. You dislike him, but you can tolerate him if he isn't being such an egotistical pure-blood."

"And when is he not being that?"

"True. Okay, bad example. It was just interesting, watching them banter back and forth."

"And my dad... was he really good at Quidditch?"

"Fantastic. He would even make us watch him practice! Of course, that's when Lily and I would do our studying!"

Harry chuckled. "Could you tell they loved each other?"

"Oh, yes. Although, Lily was quick to put him in his place. When they found out that Severus and I were engaged, he and Sirius started yelling... kind of like Ron did. James said that I was too young to get married. Lily quickly pointed out that they were already engaged, and he changed his opinion very quickly!" she said through her giggles.

"I actually think I know where they got your name from. I was sleeping one day, and I was being nudged awake. I opened my eyes, and all I saw were your green eyes. I thought it was you, and I think I said something like, 'Not now, Harry,' or 'I'm up, Harry'... I can't remember. I just know I mentioned your name, and Lily asked me if Harry was my boyfriend back home. I told her no, but he was my best friend, and that you had similar eyes."

"Really? That's so bizarre! She named me after your friend... who happened to be her son!"

"Yes, bizarre is right. Believe me; I had several headaches because it was so surreal."

"What about Pettigrew?"

"Oh, him. I ignored him. I had to; I was always on the verge of hexing him right then and there. He followed us around all the time... damn rat."

"I wonder if the Time-Turner would even have let you do that."

"I don't know... never tried it. Probably not. If it didn't let me intentionally speak of the future, I doubt I could have hexed his nards off."

Harry almost choked at her choice of words.

"Did they do well in school?" he said, quickly changing the subject.

"Oh, yes, very much so. Lily told me that they both were approached by the Ministry to become Unspeakables."

"Unspeakables? Really? I never... I never knew what they did."

"I don't think many people did; I just happened to get that information before they went into the service. But that's all she said."

Harry looked over the pitch in silence. Hermione's own thoughts drifted to her friends from the past. She knew that from here on out, Halloween would mean something different to her. Having known Lily and James, her heart ached with the sadness of losing her friends. She wished she had been able to tell them goodbye and seen them one last time before she came back to the future.

After talking for several hours, Harry and Hermione headed back to the common room; the feast had ended. Ron had brought them some food back from the party and was waiting patiently for their return. He and Ron were still sitting in the common room hours later when Hermione finally went to bed; Harry excitedly told Ron everything he had learned about his family.

With Hermione's independent study and Severus' classes, it was difficult for them to have any free time together; in fact, they hadn't been alone since that night they addressed everyone about their involvement; however, they kept it touch through notes.

Although Hermione enjoyed writing to him, she desperately wanted to be in his arms. Several days after Halloween, she decided that she couldn't take any more time away from him and told him so. She asked him to meet her in the Room of Requirement, in her 'home,' where they had met so many times before. Usually, he was quick in returning her notes, but this time, nothing came back. She went to lunch slightly irritated, but the moment she locked eyes with him, she could tell he was going to make her sweat for a while before he answered her.

He had a wicked grin on his face when he saw her, which threw her off, and she ended up tripping over herself and stumbled onto the bench. She barely touched her food and could feel his deep concentration on her the entire time; making her wonder if he was tapping into her thoughts. Before Harry and Ron were finished, she felt a swish of air behind her and a small piece of parchment fell into her lap. Out of the corner of her eye, she saw him striding across the Great Hall, with his robes billowing behind him. The reply was basic: *Eleven o'clock. Tonight.*

Hermione felt like she was floating on air and was giddy. Her insides were fluttering with anticipation as she dressed herself that evening. It had been so long since she had been with him that she felt like this was going to be her first time all over again.

She dressed in a pale, yellow, tight-fitting sweater with blue jeans, and she charmed her hair to lay straight. She applied a light coat of natural looking makeup, tucked her wand away and headed out of the dorm. She silently crept down the stairs and made sure neither Ron nor Harry was in the common room before she headed for the portrait of the Fat Lady. She slipped out into the dark corridor and made her way down to the Room of Requirement.

Severus had been in the room since ten o'clock. He had made sure the environment was warm, the fire lit, candles burning around the room, and that there was some wine with strawberries and chocolate. He wanted their night to be perfect. However, he was terrified. His body had changed since she had last seen him, and he was worried that she would find him disgusting. He hadn't been with another woman since she had left him, and he was concerned about things moving too quickly and not being able to satisfy her like he once had. But before he could mope too much, he heard the door open and listened as she walked toward the bedroom door. He scrambled over to the chair that was sitting next to the fire and faced the door, waiting anxiously as the door knob slowly turned, and the door was pushed opened.

"Good evening," he said softly.

She smiled brightly, warming his cold heart. He stood as she rushed from the door into his arms.

"Severus, I've missed you! I hate being away from you!"

He leaned down into his embrace, inhaling the scent of her. "I hate it, too, but we'll be married soon, and then nothing will keep us apart."

She pulled her face from his chest and looked into his eyes, gently moving a wisp of his black hair that had fallen into his face so that she could see him more clearly. The touch of her tender hand made him desire her even more. He hungrily kissed her while lifting her slightly from the ground. His hands gripped her sweater as she brought her arms around his neck.

For a while they rediscovered each other's mouths. Hermione gently nipped at his lower lip as he pulled away from her for air. When he lowered her back to the floor, she started unbuttoning his black shirt. Severus didn't notice, for he was trying not to get too excited too fast, but when the warmth from the room hit his bare chest, he grabbed her wrists, startling her.

"Hermione... I'm..."

"What? What's wrong?"

"I want this night to be special. I've been celibate for almost twenty years--"

"I know you have been, and I really appreciate that. I also know as your position in the war, you weren't really able to have other relations."

"And because I desired no one but you. My point is that I want tonight to last... to take it slow. Also... I'm... nervous. I'm not the eighteen-year-old boy that you made love to before. I don't look the same."

"Well, probably not, Severus; time does seem to age people."

"I'm serious! I've been through things that have left my body scarred." He ripped off his shirt and held his left forearm out. "And you surely haven't seen this before," he said, referring to his Dark Mark.

Hermione glanced down and turned her head, tears forming in her eyes.

"Look at it! I have for nearly twenty years. You'd better get used to seeing this, my dear, because it doesn't wash off."

Hermione turned back to look at his arm. His fist was tight and the veins in his arms seemed to be standing out. She let the tears fall down her cheeks as she reached out with her hand and gently ran her fingers around the black tattoo that was embedded in her fiancé's skin. She tried to envision all the pains that he had encountered because of that mark, and although she was saddened by the sight of it, she wanted him to know that she still loved him in spite of the mark. Her fingers traveled down to his fist, and she pushed his tight grip open and intertwined her own fingers with his.

"Well? Can you stomach seeing this everyday?"

"Yes, I can. Because I know why you did it, and it will stand as a reminder of what we both have been through. Severus, I don't care what your body looks like or how many scars you have. They make you the person you are today; the person that I love."

He stared down at her; he had been sure the sight of the Dark Mark would have repulsed her, but her reaction was the one he really wanted; she never ceased to amaze him.

She started running her fingers around the other scars that he had across his chest.

"Do you know how you received each one of these?"

"Only the larger ones."

She walked around him and started to examine his back. He had more lashes there than on his chest, and she touched each one in silence.

"Those are mostly from being beaten with a whip," he said warily.

"I'm sorry for your pain," she said quietly from behind him. Severus heard something soft fall to the floor, but didn't have time to turn around; Hermione had snaked her arms between his and wrapped them around his still-slender body. He felt her bare breasts upon his back and her lips tenderly kissing him. She rubbed her palms over his stomach, making her way down to the top of his pants. Severus tipped his head backward and released all his insecurities in a single breath.

He then grasped her hands and twirled her around to face him. He put his hands on either side of her face, brought her into another passionate kiss and slowly walked her over to the bed. He released his kiss and looked at the beautiful person standing in front of him. He bent low and gently kissed her left nipple while massaging her other breast. He swirled around her areola with his tongue and then sucked harder and harder on her until she moaned with pleasure.

Hermione started fumbling with his pants, and he with hers. They quickly pulled their remaining garments off, and together they slipped under the covers.

Severus leaned his upper body over hers and continued kissing her lips, nibbling on her neck and sucking on her nipples. Hermione pinched his nipples and lightly dragged her fingernails across his sides.

He made his way down to her lower lips and rubbed on her clit. Hermione was burning with desire and started moaning deeply. "I want you so bad! Ohhh, right there... right there!"

"You like that?" he breathed into her neck.

"Mmmm... you didn't forget what I liked."

"Of course not. Just as I know you want this," he slipped a finger deep inside of her and circled it around her walls.

"Ahhh! Ohh, Severus! Ah, hmmm... so good... yes..."

"That's it, my love, squeeze down. I love feeling that."

"Severus... please! I'm almost there... Get inside of me... I want to feel you!"

He pulled his wet finger out of her and rolled onto his back. "Come here." He motioned for her to sit on him. She climbed over his legs and took his raging cock in her hand and guided it into her as she lowered herself down.

"Ohh, gods! That's it! You're so beautiful."

"Oh, Severus!" Hermione rocked into him harder making her breasts sway back and forth. He grasped her hips and helped her grind into him. She slid down the length of him faster and faster, causing his nails to dig into her ass cheeks.

"Mione, I'm going to cum!"

"OHH, PROFESSOR! YES! CUM INSIDE OF ME!"

With a deep growl, Severus finally let himself go, screaming out loud. Hermione joined his ecstasy and tilted her head back as her orgasm burst through her body. Her legs were shaking, and she could feel his semen filling her. Still, he drove into her, wanting to make sure their sexual high continued for a little longer.

After they had calmed down, Severus held her tightly. He never wanted to lose the woman next to him again. It had been too long, and he was on the verge of an emotional break down.

"Thank you; that was wonderful," she said.

When he didn't reply, she pulled away from him and saw a somber look on his face.

"Are you okay?" she asked.

"I have always had a recurring dream. You were in my arms again, and everything was the way I wanted it. I just hope I'm not dreaming right now. It's hard to believe that after all these years, you are finally back in my arms where you belong."

She slipped back into his arms. "You're not dreaming, Severus. This is very real. I am here in your arms, and I am yours forever."

He lightly stroked her hair. "I love you, Mione."

"I love you more," she said as she closed her eyes and fell asleep in his arms.

The warm sun on Hermione's skin, and the rolling of the waves had almost put her to sleep. She dug her toes deeper into the cool sand and adjusted her sunglasses. She was at peace and was extremely happy.

"Mione, are you going to come inside? I'm getting lonely," a silky voice shouted from behind her.

She rolled over on her stomach and looked up to see her new husband waiting impatiently at the glass doors of the beach house they had rented for their honeymoon. He was barefoot and shirtless, only wearing his loose fitting, black cotton pants that hung low on his hips, revealing the dark patch of hair trailing down from his belly button.

"You could join me out here," she yelled up at him.

She knew that he hadn't really wanted to honeymoon on the beach, but he had wanted to make her happy, and this was what she had picked. Being the good wife that she was, she wanted to make sure that he was going to be happy here for the week, and when she saw the look of annoyance that he gave her, she swiftly gathered her belongings and marched back up to the house, leaving the private beach empty.

He stood there watching her as she trampled through the heavy sand toward him. She almost felt like she was back at their wedding. He had stood the same way he was now, watching her glide down the aisle. Hermione didn't have too many memories from her wedding; she was too busy staring at him the entire time. What she did remember, though, was madness.

As soon as the students had left for the holidays, they had been going to be married. Even though Hermione had been planning the wedding since around November, there had been still so much to do and so little time to do it in.

Remus had been going to be his best man, and Hermione had had the boys stand next to her. She had wanted a Muggle~~and~~ magical ceremony; so to make things easier, they had combined the two.

It had been a simple, yet elegant, wedding on the hill that overlooked the Black Lake. It had been his idea to have it there, and Hermione hadn't been able to resist the beautiful views. She had known that he would be wearing black, so she had picked silver and red as the other colors. Her dress had been simple, made with a row of lace and trim under her bodice. It had been ivory, and she had worn a single red poinsettia in her hair.

Since she had wanted a Christmas themed wedding, there had been twinkling white lights in the trees, garland and holly draped on the sides of the chairs, and with the snow on the ground, it had tied the entire event nicely together.

It had been a wild few days of planning and shopping, and then the wedding and reception themselves had worn both Hermione and Severus out completely. As soon as the reception, which was held in the Great Hall, had been over, they had Apparated to this beach house that had been recommended by Dumbledore. Together, they had used their last of their energy to ward the beach and the home, and then passed out from exhaustion.

Hermione had awakened early that morning; the light coming in from the large glass windows was blinding her. She looked at her husband. He had conveniently put a pillow over his head and blocked out the strong light. She didn't dare wake him; she didn't want Professor Snape on her honeymoon, she wanted Severus, so she snuck out of the bed and rifled through her luggage and found her bathing suit.

She quickly hurried outside with her towel, tanning lotion, book and sunglasses. She had wanted to relax like this ever since he had agreed to take her here, and she couldn't resist the calling sun.

She had done some light reading and was finally getting ready to take a nap when he had called her to come back inside.

"Good afternoon, wife," he said as she dropped her belongings on the small deck.

Swaying her hips slightly more, she walked up to him and placed her arms around his neck, bringing him down to meet her lips.

"Good afternoon, husband. Did you sleep well?"

"Yes, but we will have to do something about that blasted sun coming in."

She chuckled to herself and walked further inside. Suddenly she was pulled backward; he had wrapped his arms around her, pulling her into his body. She squeaked from the surprise attack, and he growled in her ear.

"You know, laughing at your husband has consequences," he said roughly.

Before she could answer, he flung her onto the bed, causing her to bounce across it. She was on her stomach and felt him get onto the bed from behind her.

"Severus!"

"Hush. You're going to take your punishment. Put your hands above your head," he said in his harsh professor tone.

She didn't move.

"You insolent brat. Fine, then we will do this the hard way." He grasped her wrists and pulled her arms behind her back, magically tying her hands together.

"Severus Snape!"

"Tut, tut. First, you laughed at your husband and then you disobeyed a direct order. I gave you a chance to have things done more easily... now, it's my way."

She didn't even have a chance to protest before he had slapped her bottom. Since she was only wearing her bathing suit, there was nothing to ease the pain.

"OW!"

"I'm sorry, did you say something?" he asked darkly.

"That hurt!"

"Really? How about this?" He had been straddling her legs, holding her in place. Now he put one knee between her legs and pushed them open. He softly ran his fingers over her bathing suit. Then, slowly, he reached under the cloth and touched her clit, flicking it and teasing her.

"Ohh... mmm..."

She felt herself tingling with excitement at his touch and wanted more. When she was starting to fall deeply into the pleasure that he was giving her, another smack hit her other cheek.

"Oh, my!"

The sensation of her stinging flesh had a direct connection with the deep desire in her groin.

"Do it again," she said in a raspy voice.

"Ahh, does my little masochist like this?"

"Yes, you teasing arse, do it again!"

This time he yanked her bathing suit over her bottom, revealing a lightly reddened rear. He could see her juices flowing out of her and inserted a slender finger into her wetness. His other hand swung back and came down hard on his target, causing her to scream out in a high-pitched shrill.

"Again...please!"

"Your begging isn't good enough," he said as he removed his fingers, making her ache with desire.

"You fucking tormentor! Please, touch me! I want you!"

"More."

"Oh, Severus... I want... I need you. I want you to feel you inside of me!"

While she was begging, he had lowered his pants and revealed his hardened cock. He had been stroking it while she was screaming out her pleas, and as soon as she confessed that she needed him, he smacked her hard again.

She shrieked again, but instead of sliding his fingers in her like she thought, he prodded his tip around her opening and then rammed it inside of her. The sudden change took Hermione off guard.

"MMMM!! YES!!"

"Get on your knees!" he said, after releasing her from the magical binds.

She struggled to get up, but he helped by pulling her hips into his lap and moved in and out of her. She started circling her hips, trying to get the most friction possible when he wrapped his fingers in her hair and pulled her head backward.

They were both moaning and breathing rapidly.

"Yes... mmm, right there!" she cried.

"I love being inside of you!"

He released her hair and brought his hand around to her clit and was rapidly flicking his fingers over the spot.

"Aaaahhh, yes!" she moaned, and then they both exploded into each other.

Hermione collapsed on the bed, and Severus fell to the right of her, both completely spent.

He pulled her close to his body and ran his fingers through her wild hair. He watched her as she slept, scanning her face over and over trying to burn her image into his mind. He still half expected to wake in a cold sweat, screaming out her name, tears streaming down his face and his heart beating madly out of his chest as he realized it was just another dream. He had always had a hard life. An unjust life, he thought, but now--well, now, he felt like the luckiest man on earth. To have gone through a twenty-year nightmare and survive! And then to finally end up with the love of his life!

Impossible. But yet, here she was. In his arms. As his wife. And she loved him-*him!*

For once in my life, I can finally say that I'm truly happy, he thought to himself as he twirled a thick curl around his pale finger.

Well, that wasn't necessarily true, was it? He suddenly remembered something.

Something dreadful.

There was *always* something that caused him to be on edge and always in a high state of alert. Yes, his happiness wasn't going to last long, was it? Of course not. He was Severus Snape. And something always ruined Severus Snape's life. Wait--he couldn't think like that. He had promised his wife. He was going to learn to relax--he was going to enjoy his happiness.

He closed his eyes and let himself smile--a true smile--as he held his wife--as he held the one thing that he had always wanted: his Mione Jean.