

Cursed

by moogling

His lover is cursed to be a hawk at night. Weasley is pawing all over her. Voldemort's still not dead. And the old codger is still meddling. Worst of all, Severus Snape is a bloody kitten.

Sunset

Chapter 1 of 4

His lover is cursed to be a hawk at night. Weasley is pawing all over her. Voldemort's still not dead. And the old codger is still meddling. Worst of all, Severus Snape is a bloody kitten.

Author's Notes Dedicated to M, beloved twenty-year-old cat of the family. I hope this has some kind of semblance to Ladyhawke, since I wrote this according to a friend's fuzzy memory of the movie and Wikipedia.

Sunset.

He had once loved that time of day, watching the blood red sky as the sun dipped into the far horizon little by little, until it was a bare sliver left, and a purple had engulfed the sky before all turned dark.

It was now the bane of his existence.

The dissipating sunlight illuminated the dungeon a window had been fitted in centuries ago, for a Potions professor who, like him, secretly enjoyed the scenery. Severus Snape, in the form of a black kitten, was on the settee lying in the lap of a napping Hermione. She still loved him, no matter what shape he was in.

And he too, he thought guiltily, but never managed to say it to her. This... transformation prevented him from speaking his mind. All he managed to give were little mews and purrs.

As the crimson sky shifted to an amethyst, he could feel the change. An outstretched paw, draped possessively over her, was elongating, each pad stretching out to form fingers, claws retracting, and the fur disappeared.

He reached up to her, with his human hand, about to caress her face. But the change was already taking place. She was sprouting feathers, brown with black flecks, and shrunk, her face taking a hawk's face and her legs into talons.

Now human, Severus cursed loudly. Voldemort had decided not to kill him, no; he'd decided to be so much crueller. Wormtail, in his rat form, had found about their relationship and told the Dark Lord, who had summoned him on the spot.

Trelawney had made a prediction too, but too late for Severus or Hermione to hear it. Hermione thought she was a fraud, so she wouldn't have listened it was only till Snape came back as a kitten that she was afraid.

And so it came to pass, that at the break of day, Severus Snape turned from a human to a kitten, and his lover, Hermione Granger, would turn into a hawk the moment the

sun went down.

While he was dressing himself in his typical Potions master robes, Hermione had already woken and perched on his shoulder, ready to go out with him on his evening rounds. It had been almost two months since the curse, and everything seemed the same as before.

Except that Hermione was never around when Severus was.

Dumbledore, the old fool, and McGonagall knew they were the ones who found Snape, dying, in kitten form, almost hidden from view among the long grasses near the Forbidden Forest. Hagrid only treated him as a kitten and didn't know Severus was it.

Severus rounded the corner near the Great Hall and heard two students gossiping. The gossip never stopped in Hogwarts there was always some disappearance, something slanderous or some rumour about the teachers.

"Did you just see Snape?"

"Yeah. Ya know, he never pops up during day? Professor Granger took over his Potions class in the mornings a while ago. She's so much better."

"What is he, a vampire?"

"Probably. He hasn't been out since..."

He decided to show himself. "Mr. Radley, Mr. Murphy, fifty points off Hufflepuff each. For talking about teachers in such way."

It was at that moment that Eoghan Murphy and Michael Radley, both second years, realized that Professor Snape had a hawk on his shoulder as he swept away with a flourish of black robes. The bird, with its onyx eyes, was staring at the two students in an almost disapproving manner.

"Bloody freaky bird."

"Hey, it's Snape. What kind of familiar did you think he would have? Some fluffy thing?"

The two irritated students disappeared back up the stairs, and Severus felt the bird on his shoulder ready to take off in their direction.

"Leave it, Hermione. They're just misinformed children." The bird settled but still looked disgruntled. He sighed. Leave it up to Hermione to stand up to him.

To him, it was a stroke of luck that he and Hermione had even managed to get together. He had always thought she would end up with the youngest Weasley boy, who always hung around her with Potter. They didn't become fast friends when she joined the Hogwarts faculty, but slowly warmed to each other, as he realized she was no longer the overly enthusiastic know-it-all who only memorized from books.

No. She was so much more. To an ex-Death Eater and spy like him, she was the embodiment of love, care and understanding. She didn't blame him when she found herself changing every into a hawk. She still loved through and through, like she always said when he was a kitten.

Returning back to their shared chambers for dinner (they no longer had dinner together with the staff, unless it was for something major, and Dumbledore respected the decision), Hermione flew to her tall perch nestled in the corner and proceeded to eat the portion of food that the house-elves had left for her.

Severus smiled disconsolately, watching his lover, as a bird, eat. Trelawney's words haunted him, as they told them the exact nature of the curse they shared.

Forever shall it haunt the two,

From day to night, and night to day,

But if the two shall meet with Him

Both in the form of God's image,

The curse shall be no more.

Sure, it showed a way of freedom. But he did not understand it 'God's image'? He was no Christian Muggle; there was no God to him. Hermione had spent forever mulling over the prediction, even though she doubted the art of Divination.

Perhaps it was false hope. False hope that they would ever be free to get married, to have children, and to watch them grow up, join Hogwarts, and have their grandchildren.

Finished with his dinner, he laid the cutlery down and watched as elven magic took place, whisking the dirty dishes away to the kitchens. It was time for him to get started on marking the essays, since Hermione was in her bird state.

The younger years had been hoping too much when they'd thought Hermione was going to mark nicer than he when she'd first taken over his classes. She was nicer in the classroom, but she'd marked essays with an iron fist, even at four a.m. in the morning.

He took over not long after, seeing how exhausted she was after each day, and proceeded to mark each and every paper at night while she slept. At first it surprised him the standard of her teaching was just as good as his, and the students did not slack off. But then again, she was his equal in *almost* everything.

Time ticked slowly as he marked each one, red ink marking each page he saw. The dunderheads were the same every year, and he was lucky to have had Hermione as a student. She was one of the few who really did work properly, when he didn't have to be biased towards to any Death Eater's spawns.

Eventually his eyelids became heavier, and he crawled into bed, Hermione on her side as a bird. When he woke up, he would be a kitten again.

"WHAT?!"

Dumbledore waved off Hermione's outburst with a smile and repeated himself again. "Mr. Ronald Weasley, your friend from when you used to be in Hogwarts! I've hired him to be the Potions Professor while Severus is *busy*." Dumbledore's twinkling eyes turned to the kitten in Hermione's arms.

The kitten wanted to claw at the old man's smile. The old codger knew Weasley couldn't do a single thing right with a cauldron and potion ingredients, and yet he still hired him, just to get a rise out of Severus.

The damned old man knew Weasley was still *after* his Hermione. What the hell was he doing?

"He'll be at breakfast, so we'll need to be there to welcome him."

Oh, the nerve of that crackpot. He was going to pay.

Hermione looked like she was going to protest, but gave up. Severus decided to mowl at her, pleading with her to skip breakfast.

"No, Severus," she sighed, "I still have to face him anyway. Better now than later, you know?"

Well, if Weasley was going to lay a hand on her, he would retaliate. Even if he had to terminate with extreme prejudice.

The redhead was there, his eyes scanning Hermione down. Ohh... he was asking for something to be done to him. Even he, Severus Snape, master of self-control, had had his trigger finger itching badly during the Potter wedding.

Ginerva Weasley, the youngest Weasley, had married the Boy and had invited everyone from the Order to their party. Weasley had been practically fawning over his Hermione, and he had been able to do nothing to stop it. No one knew of their relationship in fact, it was Severus himself who was reluctant to tell.

The reason was, ironically, because the Dark Lord would find out.

And he had. He'd cast the curse on Severus as he was battered and dying, from the torture, all because Peter Pettigrew had found his way into the castle and reported his findings to the Dark Lord. Even Dumbledore didn't know the counter curse Voldemort had made it himself and used it on him to test.

Ah well. Voldemort had been quiet for a while, and perhaps by killing him, they would be free. Perhaps.

Hermione gulped as she watched Ron bound towards her and Severus, arms stretched out for a hug. She would be a fool not to realize that Ron had a massive crush on her. And even after all these years of dissuading him, he always believed they would get married.

Pasting a happy smile on her face, she let Severus onto the floor, who gave a dissatisfied meow, and hugged Ron. Loosely of course, so her arms were, instead of pulling him towards her, the barrier between him and her.

"I heard you were here, Mione, so I decided to apply," he enthused, and Hermione groaned. Hopefully, she wouldn't have to crush his delicate little feelings while he was here. A heart-broken, vengeful Ron was worse than an angry Ron.

Hermione picked up Severus, who was circling her legs rather territorially, and held him in her arms again.

"Is that the new Crooks?"

Severus seemed ready to pounce at Ron, but Hermione held onto him. "Uh. no. He's new. Snarky." Dammit. Severus was really struggling against her arms now.

"So.. uh, cute." Ron, being Ron, leaned forward as if to pet Severus. Hermione wanted to warn him, but it was too late. The kitten had extended its claws and proceeded to scratch up his freckled face.

"Se.. SNARKY!" Hermione quickly corrected herself and pulled the kitten away from Ron, who now sported various gashes across his face from Severus' claws. "I'm so sorry, Ron, Snarks..."

With what Severus thought Ron assumed to be a dashing smile (it ended up as more of a weird, perverted one), Ron gallantly shook his head. "It's fine, Mione. I'll just go up to Madam Pomfrey's to get it fixed up. He's just as fierce as Crooks."

Only to you, Hermione thought.

As he left the Great Hall, Hermione felt Severus relax in her arms. With a quiet reprimand, she whispered, "You shouldn't have scratched him, Severus. He's my friend."

His feline eyes looked at her, expressing his distaste, and with that, he leap out of her arms and towards the dish of warm milk waiting for him next to her chair.

The look of longing in Ron's eyes when he'd left was not missed out by Severus. That look would not do. Not at all.

The boy would find some freshly coughed up hairballs on his pillow soon. It was one of the perks being a kitten after all.

Response to prompt:

11. Ladyhawke Prompt: two lovers being separated by the curse, (which was "always together, forever apart" as they were separated as man and woman by night and day) and the only way to break the curse was to appear before their attacker as man and woman at the same time. I don't want to see a remake/mimic of the movie with just the names changed. I want to see an HP fanfic using the premise of the movie into a great HP love story (all while trying to take out Lord Voldything, 'cause it would fit perfectly in that time frame). Because it is a wonderful love story Oh, and there really needs to be a Mouse character; he really tied it all together!

Work to Do

Chapter 2 of 4

His lover is cursed to be a hawk at night. Weasley is pawing all over her. Voldemort's still not dead. And the old codger is still meddling. Worst of all, Severus Snape is a bloody kitten.

"Umm... Mione?" came the nervous voice of Ron from behind Hermione's Potions journal. He always had that tone when he needed a favour. Sighing, Hermione delicately folded her reading material and looked sternly into Ronald Weasley's blue eyes. He gulped.

"Yes?" She had been enjoying a nice article on the collaboration of Charms and Potions in a recent study when he'd rudely disturbed her. No doubt to ask for something stupid.

He seemed to shrink on the spot under her gaze. "I was wondering... Snape left the syllabus for second years, and he said I'm supposed to explain the properties of Kappa skin..." Hermione definitely knew what was wrong.

"This is second year stuff, Ron. You don't know it? You did your NEWTs and OWLs!" Ron definitely looked like he regretted bothering her. "Go look in the textbook!"

Sweat seemed to drip from Ron's freckled forehead and trickle down his face to wet his robes. "Thing is, class starts at eight." Quivering on the spot, Ronald knew he was in for it. He didn't even know why he'd applied for the temporary position of Potions professor, out of all the jobs available. He absolutely hated Potions.

But it was for a good cause. He would suffer teaching and relearning from the damned Potions textbooks again just to be with his Mione. Harry was now settled with Ginny, busy starting his own little family. And Mum was nagging him to start his, being the only single Weasley left. If Mione married him, he would go back to the Hit Wizard job, and she could stay at home and raise the kids. No cats though. He had been ready for bed one night and found grotesque brown poop-like objects on his pillow. She'd have to give Snarks away or something.

Hermione, on the hand, was positively fuming. Ronald Billus Weasley had bothered her reading, asked her a stupid question, expected help, and was now standing there, daydreaming about Quidditch, without a doubt. "RON!" she shouted, rousing him from his thoughts. "You're daydreaming you're not even paying attention. Go do it yourself!" She stormed off, and Ron groaned.

He'd have to do some quick reading or bring the textbook into class.

In fact, it was the first class that the students of Hogwarts had ever had in which a teacher didn't know his or her material. The students were greeted with the sight of a redhead with a disarray of textbooks in front of him, looking extremely befuddled.

"Hello, I'm Professor Weasley, and I'm taking over Potions right now," he managed to belt out while avidly scanning the textbooks for anything concerning Kappas. Despite this, he noticed a hand sticking up in the rows of students. "Yes?"

"Where's Snape?" piped a voice, near the back.

Ron had heard some rumours floating around. Some said that Snape, the old greasy bat, was indeed a vampire who had skin problems after staying in the dungeons for too long. Lack of Vitamin D, they had said, whatever that meant. "He's on sick leave. Now turn to..." he glanced at his page, "page 115 to make an infusion and then an effusion of Kappa skin and Gillyweed."

Another hand, a rather excited one though, popped up. Ron pointed to it, and a girl's voice asked, "Isn't Kappa skin and Gillyweed just a base? What are we going to do with it?"

Oh boy. Think, Ronald, think!

That isn't my job! Hermione is the one who thinks around here!

Well, Her-my-on-ee isn't here right now. It can't be that hard, can it?

Oh, shut up.

"We're... going to use the base next lesson." Well, at least he'd defused a potential problem. Now all he had to do was to find what they could make with the base.

The rest of the class went off quietly as Ron congratulated himself for passing the first ten minutes without chaos. However, there was always bound to be destruction by some second year. There was a Neville in each year, after all.

An explosion caused a cauldron to ricochet off the walls, and the superhot pewter burned through the teacher's mahogany bench. Ron barely stifled a scared squeak. The culprit, a small dirty blond boy named Oliver Treadway, Gryffindor, was covered in a muddy glop that seemed to be multiplying on his skin.

With surprising intelligence, Ron extinguished the fire, and turned to the boy. "It's okay."

But what he did next was extremely stupid. The kitten watching in the rafters wanted to slap his own forehead with his paw and also scratch the 'teacher'. "*Evanesco*," muttered Ron, and the kitten, as well as the rest of the class, watched in unveiled horror as the scene unfolded.

It was one of the basic rules of Potions safety that most Potion accidents that ended up on skin could not be cleaned with an '*Evanesco*', especially dried Kappa skin used as a Potion ingredient, thought Severus. The spell reacted violently with the Kappa skin, and if the *Evanesco* was strong enough, it could be explosive.

Ronald Weasley had somehow missed the bolded letters stating, **'Never Evanescio Kappa Skins.'**

As soon as the spell hit the muddy boy, a wave of energy pulsed out, throwing Ron into the dungeon wall, rendering him unconscious. Oliver, however, was untouched, looking extremely frightened, with a pink tint in his cheeks.

Even Severus could smell it from the rafters. The boy had emptied his bowels in fright. Traipsing across the rafters, he headed in the direction of the Infirmary. The students were probably too stupid to get Madam Pomfrey, and Ronald Weasley, their teacher, was unconscious.

The dunderheads couldn't get worse this year.

Ron looked up, groaning, his eyes greeting a pair of onyx ones. He screamed.

"Close your gaping mouth, Mr. Weasley," growled Snape. "You'll wake up the other students." Ron promptly clamped his mouth shut.

"Wh... What are you doing here, Snape?" he stuttered, finally noticing the hawk on Snape's shoulder.

Severus Snape felt like strangling the boy. He had just blown himself across a classroom, endangering a class full of students, got Hogwarts into a load of trouble, and had the nerve to ask why he was here. "You did something extremely reckless and stupid today. The Board of Governors will be coming up in the next few weeks."

Severus Snape had decided to visit the Infirmary to see if the rumours were true. A teacher had forgotten something so basic that a second year knew and had nearly killed himself. But this was Weasley, Snape corrected himself, and you could never expect a Weasley to remember anything but Quidditch.

He didn't understand why Albus had chosen to hire *Weasley* out of all the people applying for the job. Lucius and the rest of the Board would storm in soon, disrupting lessons and all that, trying to destroy Dumbledore's credibility.

Which reminded him he would have to deal with Lucius' snooping in Hogwarts. Ever since Draco had wandered off, maintaining his neutrality (he was a Slytherin indeed), Lucius had to do everything himself.

And plus, Severus needed to exact his own personal revenge. He was the one who had helped find the information for the Dark Lord to create the curse that he and Hermione were under. Perhaps with some *persuasion*, he would hand over some tidbit of information.

By this time, Ron realized Snape was, oddly, spacing off. "Snape?" he asked curiously, waving his hand in front of his face.

Severus snapped out of his thoughts and glared at the boy. "That's **Professor** Snape to you, Mr. Weasley. I'm the one who is the Potions master after all." And with that, he swept out of the ward, leaving a disgruntled Ron ready to spew curses.

Hermione found herself days later, looking over an old Charms tome, with the kitten sprawled over her lap. He seemed to be napping, but she could never be sure. Severus was an ex-spy, and like Moody said, he always held constant vigilance.

Her fingers ran through his fur, stroking him like she used to do with Crooks, and almost like Crooks, he gave a contented purr, nudging his small head against her hand.

Severus, though enjoying this moment, was worried about other things. Lucius Malfoy was to be in Hogwarts soon, along with his chuffed and well-bribed board members. One mishap, one accident, and they would soon hound Albus to sack the teacher and somehow step down from his position. So far, Lucius hadn't succeeded into taking down the old codger. But Malfoys always had some sort of trick up their sleeve.

Lucius would especially be looking out for Hermione's misdeeds. He had always had some sort of vendetta against her, probably because she was Muggle-born and had always bested Draco. Draco had fallen from grace and was probably in hiding by now word would have gotten back to the Dark Lord that he had lost a potential follower and backer.

He could hear her sigh desolately. "I should've told Ron the properties of Kappa skin when he asked, Severus. Then he wouldn't be in the Infirmary right now and the Board coming down on us. They're going to fire Ron for sure."

His feline head turned to her face, slate eyes scanning her expression. Perhaps he had a little work to do before the Board came. A little something concerning a dunderheaded Weasley.

"Luciuss?" hissed a sibilant, cold voice in the dark corner of a room.

"Yes, milord?" Platinum blond hair down, Lucius Malfoy bowed in front of Lord Voldemort, weak from his last round of Cruciatuus.

The snake-man seemed pleased about something, as he gave a rather contented hiss. "You will be visiting Hogwartsss soon, I believe. Sssee how our fellow Sssnape is doing. I would like to ssee the fruitss of my success."

"Yes milord." With that, Lucius Malfoy Disapparated from the spot and found himself in a regal conference room, with a table of older, extravagant-looking wizards awaited him.

Lucius' tight lips formed a twisted smirk as he faced the grim-faced wizards. "Gentlemen, I believe we have work to do."

Peeves and Kitten

Chapter 3 of 4

His lover is cursed to be a hawk at night. Weasley is pawing all over her. Voldemort's still not dead. And the old codger is still meddling. Worst of all, Severus Snape is a bloody kitten.

Author's Notes The idea of Severus communicating with Scrabble pieces isn't my idea. I don't remember where I read it, but it was in a piece of fanfiction. A little section dedicated to one of my favourite comic strips - Calvin and Hobbes.

(Edited Note: The Scrabble idea is from "Spinster" by LadyoftheMasque.

Peeves, or Percival Evans-Esham on the official Spectre record in the Ministry of Magic, was no mere apparition. Sure, he was never some once-living entity like Nearly Headless Nick or the Bloody Baron, but everyone *assumed* that Peeves had nothing more than a brain cell on anything apart from pranking people.

Poltergeists like him came from excess magic. And Hogwarts, being one of the main Wizarding schools in England, had plenty of it. The stones that made up Hogwarts Castle practically exuded it. But Peeves didn't just come from Hogwarts' magic. He came from the magic that the students made.

Hormonal teenagers, mischievous boys, lovesick girls, you name it. Peeves was like a sponge, absorbing anything. He had a conscience of course, even though he wasn't quite living or breathing; he just didn't quite use it that much.

Like during that Umbridge *fiasco*. That witch depleted his source of magic immensely no one cast nasty hexes to prank anyone, no one exuded excess magic from their havoc-wreaking.

In fact, this was the method that the Ministry of Magic used to destroy rogue poltergeists. They were cast into a room, heavily warded against any excess magic and left to starve. They withered away, a mere echo in the dark, dank room in which they were incarcerated.

Dolores Umbridge didn't have the necessary paperwork to do that, but Peeves knew she had certainly wanted him to suffer for what he'd done to her as a child. She had been a snotty, stick-up-the-ass, pink-obsessed Hufflepuff, Peeves recalled, and he had enjoyed ruining her days in Hogwarts.

And the Weasley twins had saved the day. They had brought in fireworks, the giant swamp (oh, that thing had almost completely rejuvenated him), allowing students to create the mayhem that Peeves had so desperately needed. Of course, when the twins left, Peeves was forever in their debt.

Following their orders, he had brought chaos to the ugly witch. And Hogwarts would never be bothered by *her* again.

But today, oh, he was dealing with a slick Slytherin who was rather high up in the Ministry and had the power to destroy him. And Hogwarts was in danger again. Peeves remembered the last three generations of Malfoys. Abraxas, Lucius and Draco were almost the same: blond, rich, and snooty. He had taken great enthusiasm in dumping dungbombs on them, destroying their clothes and dyeing their hair into some hideous colours.

Sure, Dumbledore had told him to behave himself when the Board of Governors was around, but Peeves knew the old man well enough. It was kind of like a double-entendre; by telling him to behave, Dumbledore knew he wouldn't and would even increase his pranking by tenfold. Well, the big bearded man, also one of the most powerful wizards to have lived, had given him the 'okay-go' for pranking, and Peeves wasn't going to disappoint Dumbledore.

The Governors and a Lucius Malfoy would soon find themselves extremely preoccupied soon. Peeves would make sure of it.

So far, Hermione and Severus had come up with a system for communication. The Muggle game Scrabble was useful. Kitten Severus and hawk Hermione could nudge the letters into order to form words or phrases, to speak their mind.

Hermione, with her brown eyes, looked at the kitten that had just pushed his letters into place on the board. She had to duplicate several letters in order for Severus to make the cut up sentence, but the look on her face was rather incredulous.

"Are you sure that this was one of the words that you heard from Voldemort?" she asked, still sceptical about the word on the board. The black kitten nodded, sure of himself. Severus had escaped with his life, and this was one of the words that Voldemort had muttered in his homemade spell.

She looked at the letters again, hoping that he was joking. "Have you ever heard this word before?" He shook his kitten head.

"T R A N S M O G R I F Y," she read aloud, giving Severus a good look in his kitten eyes. "It's from a Muggle comic strip. About a kid and his tiger."

He didn't seem to believe her. Sighing, she didn't bother to explain. "Isn't it just some fake word? I think I'll have to research more on this one..." And with that, she gave him a half-hearted pat on the head and a kiss before leaving to the library.

His obsidian eyes followed her out. Sometimes, she worked too hard for her own good. She would go on for days, surrounded by piles of books, skipping breakfast, lunch and dinner just to research. Oh, if he were only in his human form, he could stop her from her unhealthy obsession.

But he was only a kitten. They were forever separated by day and night and the bloody prophecy did them no favours. The Boy's prophecy didn't even pass yet; and Severus Snape doubted that it would. Divination was all wishy-washy and Trelawney was an unreliable hag.

Nonetheless, he still had to find out whether Lucius Malfoy knew about his new form yet. Voldemort was rather secretive about his methods of creating spells, and Severus knew this 'Transmogrify' spell had been completely new. He probably didn't know the proper results of the spell yet.

And he had to help the stupid Weasley boy in order to keep Dumbledore as Headmaster. Merlin, if there was another witch or wizard like Umbridge, Snape felt like quitting his job permanently.

Hopping off the couch, he exited Hermione's rooms and wandered through the halls, bored. Mrs. Norris, the dust coloured half-kneazle was there, away from Filch. He'd met her early on when he'd become the black kitten.

Frankly, she was just as bad as many people believed. They'd communicated through meows and purrs when Argus Filch wasn't around. She was possessive of the castle; being the only cat in the vicinity, she wasn't about to share it with him. The last time they'd been caught together, Filch had attacked him with a broom, accusing him of "attempting to impregnate Mrs. Norris" even when Mrs. Norris was attacking him with her claws. Personally, Severus wouldn't do such a thing. He was supposed to be human after all. And she was rather ugly for a cat. It was like she could read his mind and assaulted and harassed him more than before.

Well, he was definitely getting back at her for it. Hermione had introduced him to catnip, some Muggle herb that drove cats crazy. It didn't work for him when he decided to try it under Hermione's insistence.

An idea popped into his head. Hermione had shown him videos on her computer (he really hated those things) of cats' reactions to the herb. Perhaps if he could concentrate the pheromonic receptor stimulants...

He would be able to kill two birds with one metaphorical stone. Now all he needed to do was to find someone willing to do the deed.

Gliding through the large doors of the Great Hall, Lucius Malfoy's critical eyes scanned the teachers' table for Severus Snape, the traitor. The school governors behind him were all doddering fools, despite their apparently-regal appearance. Everyone, though, was silent.

He wasn't there. Instead, the blood traitor Weasley was in the Potions master seat, and the bushy-haired Mudblood was in the Charms professor seat. Snorting silently, he walked to Dumbledore's seat, his entourage following behind. The Mudblood Granger didn't deserve the Professorship.

"Hello, Governor Malfoy, and the rest of the Board of Governors," started Dumbledore as he stood up. "Welcome to Hogwarts. Everyone resume eating."

Lucius replied him with a 'hmpf'. He was going to get to the bottom of this. "Where is Professor Snape?" The vultures behind him looked ready to pick up any slip of the mouth.

"He's sick right now, but Professor Weasley is taking over his classes." His eyes were still twinkling with mischief. "You all are welcome to examine the school. I assure you it is fine, despite what you may have heard." Lucius Malfoy seemed displeased and turned to the exit. "We'll be monitoring the classes then, Headmaster Dumbledore."

Outside the hall, Lucius Malfoy organized the schedule. Each governor was to monitor each class and he himself would observe Potions classes, making sure to pick up each and every mistake that Professor Weasley would make. Hopefully, he would be able to find out where Snape had disappeared off to, since he was under his master's spell.

Ah, the Mudblood. He wanted her to be fired too, and so he assigned his most ruthless pawn, Lyle Higgs, who was also a Death Eater, to look at her classes. Higgs would most definitely bring back good news.

Dismissing the acolytes, he wandered the halls, glaring at the wayward children running to their latest classes. The ghosts he had encountered as a child were still here, floating around the castle, and the Bloody Baron gave him a stiff nod as he passed by.

Suddenly, a deluge of liquid splashed all over his body, and he glared at the perpetrator, who cackled impishly. "Smell ya later, Lucy!" came the falsetto voice of Peeves the poltergeist.

The stupid poltergeist had poured some liquid all over him. If he could prove it was a potion of sorts, he would be able to destroy the poltergeist that had tormented his Hogwarts years.

But nothing was happening to him. Perhaps it was a time-delay potion. Hurriedly, he rushed to the Infirmary, hoping Madam Pomfrey would be able to tell what on Merlin's sake the poltergeist had put on him.

As he turned the corner, he was greeted by a frenzied-looking Mrs. Norris, purring with content. Other cats, probably the students' familiars, had the same hungry-like look in their eyes and stood near Filch's cat.

Whatever Peeves had poured on him was getting the cats all riled up. Whipping out his wand with the words of a spell on his lips, he was assaulted by drooling cats, rubbing themselves all over him.

Peeves, who had reappeared behind the wriggling cat-infested Lucius Malfoy, gave thumbs up to the kitten with a Cheshire grin on its face.

Spellwork

Chapter 4 of 4

His lover is cursed to be a hawk at night. Weasley is pawing all over her. Voldemort's still not dead. And the old codger is still meddling. Worst of all, Severus Snape is a bloody kitten.

Author's Note: This chapter has been a victim of both procrastination and a mild writer's block. I've been having so much spare time on my hands I nearly forgot about writing his chapter. This, I'm afraid, is very short, but I'll try my best to keep writing frequently.

Running his fingers through his now bouncy, light and thankfully clean hair, Lucius growled angrily. The stunt that Peeves had pulled the other day had completely tainted him – cat slobber and fur was all over his body, mostly in his hair. The disgusting felines had actually managed to pin him to the floor, rendering him immobile and unable to hex them off.

It was only until the ghastly Squib Argus Filch had shooed them off with a dusty broom that the cats left him in peace. But the dust that was spread around him had a devastating effect – he returned to his room covered in cat fur, furballs, cat drool and dust bunnies, sneezing constantly.

When he had confronted Dumbledore about it, the man waved it off with the bothersome twinkle that he always held. “The liquid, according to Professor Sprout, contains catnip, which is not illegal. In fact, it is often used to stimulate Muggle cats.” And then the old man had offered him one of his blasted Lemon Drops.

He had rebutted, “Peeves should be punished for his misdeeds against students. His pranking is intolerable to students and parents alike.”

Dumbledore had brushed off his fury. The nerve of the man – the blasted fool had reminded him that Peeves was part of the school, almost like a school mascot in his own right. If Voldemort wasn't so eager to find out about the traitor Snape, he would have taken this up to the Ministry to have the bloody poltergeist exterminated and the old man fired for insubordination.

And those cats too. Putting them down would be too good for them. They would suffer for their transgressions... later. He had missed a whole day of interrogating Weasley about Snape and trying to get him fired. Turning a corner, he was greeted with the door to the newly created conference room for the Board of Governors.

All of his stupid little peons on the school board were in there, waiting diligently for him. Taking a seat, he observed the members. Day, at the very end of the table, looked like he was going to piss in his expensive pants out of excitement while on Lucius' right was his best man, Higgs, looked cool, calm and collected. The man probably had news on the Mudblood.

Dardanos Day was squirming in his seat in enthusiasm. “Day?” hissed Lucius, regretting accepting the new Governor after the old one, Governor Wilkes, had died ‘under mysterious circumstances’.

The overzealous wizard spewed out everything, from the students' gossip about Snape, to the apparent appearances of him late at night, perfectly fine, with a hawk on his shoulder. Lucius frowned. If there was nothing wrong with him, then his lord must have been wrong.

But his master was never wrong. He never bungled up a spell, even if it was of his own creation. The only time he could remember his lord's failure was with the Potter boy.

He decided to grace the eager wizard with a compliment – just to shut him up. “Well done, Day.” Dardanos smiled smugly, his chest puffed out in pride. “Anyone else? Higgs?”

The wizard to his right smirked evilly. “The Mudblood appears to do everything by the book – rules and all. But I'm sure someone will be willing to tell, under pressure...” Malfoy was thinking along the same lines too; weaker families easily bent to his will, since they feared his power over the Ministry.

They would soon find their little ‘whistleblower’ in the form of Patrick Piggot, a distant relative of a man quite familiar to Hermione and Severus.

Everyone who knew about the curse had tried to help. Minerva and Dumbledore had given Hermione all the tomes, scrolls and books on Animagi and shape shifting – Dumbledore had even pulled strings in the Ministry to allow their archives to be accessed by both Hermione and Severus.

She had come across a lone spell creator's book while rummaging in the Ministry's libraries. Spell creation was rarely done now, since people were lazy and believed they had the spells they needed already. The Ministry's laws were rather strict on them too. Any spells which were not cleared or logged into their database was automatically dark or illegal.

Even a spell created by an old lady to make cookies would be scrutinized completely, from top to bottom for any signs of ‘darkness’ by paranoid Ministry officials.

Nonetheless, they still had a right to be afraid. Voldemort and various other evil wizards had used spell creation to their own advantages, like creating numerous spells to torture information out of their victims, cause their prey to suffer slow, excruciating deaths, or even to demonstrate their superiority.

The old tome had stated that spells created by spell creators was rather like nonverbal magic. The spell words were more of a placebo – it was really the intent that mattered in spell creation. Usually the words of a new spell meant something to the caster – they believed that the words would cause a certain effect and their heart desired such effects, so the spell would erupt from the tip of the wand.

Essentially, Hogwarts was a place where they taught students to *believe* in the spell words in order for them to work. And if students accepted that *Wingardium Leviosa* and expected that the object the wand pointed at would lift up, it would work.

After all, wands were the outlets for all witches' and wizards' magical energy.

Perhaps Voldemort had read Calvin and Hobbes, found the word ‘transmogrify’, and decided to use it as his spell word. If this was any other situation, she would laugh, imagining of Voldie on the crapper with the Sunday funnies, chuckling while reading Calvin and Hobbes.

This, though, was no laughing matter. If this was the case, they were doomed.

Without knowing Voldemort's train of thought during the creation of the spell, a counter-curse would not be formed. The original curse would not be able to be cast by any

of them, since they did not possess Voldemort's intent.

Normal, regularly used curses were easier to counter, since their effects were well known. However, with a homemade curse like the 'transmogrify', it would probably take forever to counter. If Hermione randomly cast the 'transmogrify' on a test subject with the 'wrong' intent, either nothing would happen or something completely different from Voldemort's final effect would happen, depending on what the word meant to her.

Cradling her head on the library table, Hermione Granger fell into a troubled sleep. She could no longer avoid the facts – no one would be able to free her or Severus, except for Voldemort himself.

Severus had found his little bushy-haired angel asleep on the desk, surrounded by books. The bags under her eyes told him she had stayed up last night, researching about their condition.

Tentatively, he gently pawed at her face, nudging her to wake. It was morning after all and she needed to get prepared for classes. He had noticed that Higgs was ready for class, as well as Lucius, who had managed to get his hair and body free of the presence of cats.

The woman next to him woke and patted him gently on the head, thanking him. She seemed worried, but with one glimpse of her watch, she told him that she would tell him later of her findings, but right now, she had to prepare for classes.

Which meant, he had to too. A little Weasley would need Severus' help in his classes soon, with Lucius Malfoy breathing down his neck.