

# The Heart of Things

by FicklePen

A romantic drabble series based on Hermione Granger and Severus Snape's relationship post-war.

## The Professor and I

Chapter 1 of 26

A romantic drabble series based on Hermione Granger and Severus Snape's relationship post-war.

### The Heart of Things: A Collection.

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*'I do not want your admiration now, because I do not want your insults in the future. I bear with my loneliness now in order to avoid greater loneliness in the years ahead.'*

– *Sensei, Kokoro.*

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I.

They stared at each other for a single breath.

The breath stretched outwards like an expanding balloon, filling with tension and an emotion that remained amorphous and incomprehensible.

There was no pop of derision, no sudden burst of fury. And in that moment of wondering, of standing on the edge of breathlessness, it felt like an eternity had passed.

Still. So still.

Then she moved, startling him until she sat on the lonely wooden chair by his bedside, uncertain if she was unwelcome and unwanted.

The balloon remained between them with no rupture and no explosion, just a silence that was upheld by him and perpetuated by her.

As the stillness grew to become a living, breathing entity, she wondered if he had forgiven her.

She liked to think that he had.

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## The Professor and I, II

Chapter 2 of 26

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II.

The next meeting was similar to the first.

He didn't speak, and she respected his unuttered wish.

Oh, she knew very well that it was the first time someone had upheld his personal desires.

If he told her to leave, she would have. He seemed to acknowledge this, as he hadn't once protested her presence in the dreary, isolated hospital room.

Although he didn't look at her for the entirety of the visit (his hands were much more intriguing to him), she understood and wasn't at all offended.

Instead, for the first time in many weeks, she felt at peace.

A little while later, as she stood to leave, his coal-like eyes seemed to shine with a bitter but brighter light.

## The Professor and III

Chapter 3 of 26

A romantic drabble series based on Hermione Granger and Severus Snape's relationship post-war.

III.

"*You're back again,*" he rasped.

She stopped in the doorway and savoured the seed of relief suddenly blossoming in her chest. It was the first time in the many weeks since her visits began that he had spoken to her, albeit with an air of condescension.

"Yes, I am."

"Hn."

She perched herself on the edge of the haggard, old chair and stared at him rather rudely.

"Yes?" He snapped.

Brown, muddy eyes gleamed knowingly. "I brought a book."

He glanced despondently at his numb, immobile hands, and she felt the world tilt beneath her.

The seconds blurred as she steadied herself, opened the book, and began to read.

He didn't speak to her again for many weeks.

## The Professor and I, IV

Chapter 4 of 26

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#### IV.

"I am a lonely man," he said one day, suddenly and unexpectedly.

She looked up, mouth slightly agape.

"Is it possible that you are also a lonely person, Miss Granger?"

*No, she lied to herself. I'm not.*

He continued, oblivious to her unspoken lie. "I am older; I can live with my loneliness. But you are young... It must be difficult to accept your loneliness."

"I'm not lonely," she muttered unconvincingly.

"You're here, are you not?" he said, ignoring her. "Youth is the loneliest time of all. Otherwise, why should you come here so often to visit me?"

"I—"

"—Perhaps, in time, you'll realise that you cannot rid yourself of your loneliness when you are with me. I can't help you forget it, and soon you will find that you no longer want to visit me." As he spoke, the professor smiled sadly.

That night, she cried for the first time.

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**NB:** Some parts of the dialogue have been pilfered from the novel *Kokoro*.

## The Professor and I, V

*Chapter 5 of 26*

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#### V.

On her next visit, she was ready.

"I refuse to be alone."

He smirked derisively and hid the expression behind a curtain of greasy, black hair. "Spoken like a truly delusional Gryffindor."

"I have many people around me! Sometimes, it's hard to even find time to myself," she crowed, a little too smugly.

The professor stilled at her triumphant stance, his eyes taking on a faraway, glazed expression. Seeing, but unseeing. "You can be surrounded by countless people and still manage to stand alone, Miss Granger. One is always at their loneliest in the eye of the storm."

Her face fell, the smug expression slipping off like a pair of trousers too big for her.

She contemplated his words seriously and returned, ever so softly, "Then... perhaps we could be lonely together, sir."

He frowned.

## The Professor and I, VI

*Chapter 6 of 26*

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#### VI.

"My ears are bleeding," he grumbled.

"You say that every time." She smiled gently, eyes returning to the text in her hands.

"That doesn't mean it isn't true."

"Would you like me to stop?"

Silence.

Her eyes danced merrily upwards, filled with shadows and amusement.

He scowled in her general direction. "Continue, witch."

"At your service, sir," she murmured with false penitence.

"Impertinent, insufferable, in—"

"—Are you, by any chance, entering an alliteration competition in the near future?"

There was a pause before his lips curled derisively. "Insolent."

## The Professor and I, VII

*Chapter 7 of 26*

A romantic drabble series based on Hermione Granger and Severus Snape's relationship post-war.

### VII.

He looked at the deceptive package in her hands and raised a horrified brow.

"I hope you don't expect me to eat that, Miss Granger."

"It's perfectly edible!"

"I don't eat food the colour of toxic green."

"But... I made it, especially for you!" She looked at him with wounded, soulful eyes.

He sneered. "I don't care if the bloody Pope made it! I'm not eating that vile, disgusting creation of yours, it—" He didn't get a chance to say any more, as she had already shovelled an entire spoonful of her home-made cake into his mouth.

There was nothing toxic about green fondant icing.

"Happy birthday, sir!" She grinned, only to earn a glower of disapproval as he munched his way through the sugary confection.

## The Professor and I, VIII

*Chapter 8 of 26*

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*Oozora wo kayou maboroshi yume ni dani miekonu tama no yukue tazuneyo*

*Wizard who crosses the great skies, seek out the one whom*

*I cannot see, even in my dreams.*

*(unknown)*

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### VIII.

She felt his stare piercing into the side of her face.

He would not have asked, but she felt she owed him an explanation. "I apologise for not coming last week."

"I had not noticed."

She smiled at the carefully veiled, inquisitive expression on his dower face. "I was surprised with a long weekend break to Bath, and I couldn't get away."

Something flickered in his beetle black eyes. Something neither of them wished to name.

"It is of no consequence to me, Miss Granger," he said, far more abruptly than normal. "Perhaps it would be best if you discontinue any future visits. You are under no obligation to visit your former, despised Potions professor, as I have stated many times before."

"No," she gasped, appalled. "It's not an obligation! It's..." She trailed away, her eyes seeking his with a determination she hadn't felt since S.P.E.W. "It is a pleasure, sir, not an obligation."

Discovering the sincerity in her bearing, he blinked and looked away, his cheeks colouring to the dearest shade of red.

## The Professor and I, IX

*Chapter 9 of 26*

A romantic drabble series based on Hermione Granger and Severus Snape's relationship post-war.

**IX.**

She watched him secretly from the doorway.

Struggling. Always struggling.

A small grunt of irritation whistled past his clenched teeth as his cheeks deepened to an unattractive shade of puce.

Pale, spidery hands remained fixed upon his lap.

They refused to move.

She wilfully chose to ignore the tears of frustration clinging to his sooty lashes. And told herself that it was the sterility of the hospital that caused her own eyes to water.

In that moment, with a clarity that was startling, she knew that would do everything in her power to help this man.

## The Professor and I, X

*Chapter 10 of 26*

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**X.**

"I can't help you if you won't help yourself!"

"I never asked nor wanted your help," he spat furiously.

She refused to cry. "If you would only look at my notes, you'd see that my ideas are sound. According to my calculations, the nerve damage can be repaired. It's simply a case of infusing the Draught of—"

"—Enough." Only the absolute certainty in his voice made her hesitate.

He looked so old and world-weary; it nearly broke her heart.

"If you'd only give this a chance," she said quietly as she slumped down onto the edge of his bed.

He refused to look at her.

"Leave me, Miss Granger."

She left, head bowed but refusing to give up.

He may have won the battle, but he would not win the war.

# My Pupil and I, I

*Chapter 11 of 26*

A romantic drabble series based on Hermione Granger and Severus Snape's relationship post-war.

**I.**

She hadn't visited him that week.

Nor the next.

He waited patiently, ignoring the inner dread that kept creeping closer and closer, waiting to pounce.

Perhaps he truly had scared her off.

It was something that should have brought satisfaction, but he couldn't find it in himself to be pleased.

And it really was rather vexing that she should suddenly decide not to visit him. After all, it was common courtesy to give a notice of absence.

No matter; he was fine by himself.

Or so he told himself.

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**NB:** Apologies for the delay: been extremely ill and haven't had the strength to come online. :( Am getting slowly better.

# My Pupil and I, II

*Chapter 12 of 26*

A romantic drabble series based on Hermione Granger and Severus Snape's relationship post-war.

**II.**

After exactly one month of feeling her absence in the dreary white walls of the hospital, he woke to find her sitting quietly next to his bedside.

She smiled, a pained expression colouring the stretch of her rosy lips.

The rebuke on the tip of his tongue was dashed at the sight of the dark bruises that were painted beneath her expressive eyes.

She looked more exhausted than he had felt in his entire life.

"You look awful," he voiced, unable to help himself.

"Thank you," she snapped tartly. "It took me long, painful hours to achieve 'awful', I'll have you know."

His lips twitched, refusing to smile. He couldn't believe that it only took five minutes in her company to reduce him into a grinning loon.

It was all rather depressing, really.

"It's good to see you again, too, sir." She caught his eye and glanced at him knowingly.

He didn't know how to respond. Instead, he simply inclined his head and offered a grimacing, unpractised smile.

# My Pupil and I, III

*Chapter 13 of 26*

A romantic drabble series based on Hermione Granger and Severus Snape's relationship post-war.

### III.

She came through the door with an eager smile, and he was painfully reminded of how she used to be as a child.

Though the brilliance of her eyes were dulled by an indescribable sorrow, she still maintained a faint grip on her innocence.

He was loath to be the cause of its destruction.

Of all the unforgivable crimes he had committed, adding that to list would be the final straw on the camel's back.

She produced a vial of colourless liquid and stared at him in earnest. "It's been tested: a teaspoon, three times a day for the next few months... Please?"

In the end, he agreed, worn down by her hope and constant entreaties.

## My Pupil and I, IV

*Chapter 14 of 26*

A romantic drabble series based on Hermione Granger and Severus Snape's relationship post-war.

### IV.

His fingers were tingling.

Burning.

It was the oddest sensation.

He didn't know why they were tingling, but he had a fleeting suspicion that it was something to do with the wayward curl clinging vulnerably onto the edge of her shoulder.

It was only after she had left, offering him a gentle pat on his shoulder and a smile as brilliant as the sun, that he realised the tingling was the first sensation he had felt in over seven months.

Damn curl.

Hope was fleeting, but he felt it deeply.

Know-it-all.

Even though she'd gone, the day felt brighter.

## My Pupil and I, V

*Chapter 15 of 26*

A romantic drabble series based on Hermione Granger and Severus Snape's relationship post-war.

### V.

Through the closed, paper-thin doors, he could hear muffled arguing.

Her voice could easily be distinguished amidst the male posturing and grumbling that was presently trying to drown her out.

The aggravated man's voice remained a mystery to him.

He didn't recognise the tone, the intonation, nor the inflection. It was someone he had never met in his life before and yet... Yet there was something equally grating about it. Almost as if he couldn't help but be irritated by its mere presence.

His musings were interrupted as she marched through the door, slamming it shut before casting him an apologetic moue of distaste.

He resisted the urge to grin. "Male war groupie, Miss Granger?"

Her only response was to burst out laughing.

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**AN:** I'll take this moment to thank everyone for their wonderful reviews and kind comments. If I haven't been able to respond, I apologise deeply! RL/obligations have been very demanding. Updates will continue to be slow as I'm returning to college as a mature student this year. I'm hoping to fast-track myself into university to read Japanese.

Wish me luck! ^^

## My Pupil and I, VI

*Chapter 16 of 26*

A romantic drabble series based on Hermione Granger and Severus Snape's relationship post-war.

### VI.

"What are you doing?!"

She rushed at him in a frenzied state of panic, grunting as she set him upright from his fallen, twisted position over the edge of the bed. Her hands danced over his shoulders, ghosting up towards his cheeks before lingering upon his lank, oily hair to move his head back and forth.

It was almost as if she was checking the quality of goods by the way she was shaking him.

He might as well be wrapped up with a pretty little bow at this rate.

"Unhand me, Miss Granger!"

His former pupil blushed becomingly before narrowing her eyes suspiciously. "How did you get onto to the floor?"

A sly smile flitted across his face. "Magic."

Hope blossomed in the twinkle of her eyes. "Is it working?"

He felt her anticipation keenly, as if it were his own. "I believe it is, Miss Granger."

"Good," she said, relieved. "Good."

## My Pupil and I, VII

*Chapter 17 of 26*

A romantic drabble series based on Hermione Granger and Severus Snape's relationship post-war.

### VII.

They were conversing quietly when he noticed her gaze straying to the hidden photograph beneath his pillow.

His breath caught in his throat as she frowned and reached for it, no doubt believing it to be a piece of rubbish left by one of the nurses.

He could do nothing to stop her: he hadn't told her that he could finally move his hands. He didn't know why, but buried deep within his subconscious, he was concerned that if Miss Granger did find out, she would declare her job complete and leave, never to return again.

And so he watched with growing horror as her delicate fingers pulled the photograph away, ready to crumple it, until her eyes froze upon the waving image of a pretty, young woman.

A woman with deep red hair and eerily familiar eyes.

There was a terrible moment when he thought she would laugh at him. Or cry.

Of course, she did nothing of the sort.

Instead, she placed the photograph back beneath his pillow and calmly informed him, in an oddly tight voice, that she had forgotten to do something incredibly important.

And then, she was gone.

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**AN:** Again, apologies to all! Thanks to everyone for sticking with me, I know it's annoying when authors don't update. I seem to be making a habit of disappearing, but I will finish this even if it kills me. On an exciting note, I got an offer to study Japanese at university! (still holding out for my first choice uni) YAY!



# My Pupil and I, VIII

*Chapter 18 of 26*

A romantic drabble series based on Hermione Granger and Severus Snape's relationship post-war.

## VIII.

She'd dropped something on the floor.

Rummaging around in her bottomless purse, she hadn't noticed the small packet of Muggle pills falling to the ground.

He made no mention of them as she produced their weekly read with a triumphant smile.

"I knew I hadn't forgotten it!" She opened the book and settled down.

It seemed as if the previous meeting had been relegated to the 'forget and avoid' pile. She had chosen to ignore what happened, and he was in complete agreement.

Only when their meeting came to an end, and she had breezed out the door once more, did he venture out of bed to snatch the hidden packet from beneath her chair.

A specific word on the box soon caught his attention.

Contraception.

He stared at it, refusing to acknowledge the trembling in his fingers as he crumpled the packet into oblivion.

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# The Professor and I

*Chapter 19 of 26*

A romantic drabble series based on Hermione Granger and Severus Snape's relationship post-war.

## IX.

She slammed the Potions text shut. "Right. This is ridiculous."

He stared straight ahead, avoiding her shrewd gaze.

"What on earth's the matter?"

Thin lips puckered into a sour expression.

"You haven't said a word since I came in. Have I done something...?" She trailed away, desperation colouring her voice.

"There is nothing to say," he replied tersely.

"You didn't even answer any of my questions!"

"I was inclined to believe that irritating, interfering know-it-alls knew everything. Or perhaps you are simply hiding your stupidity beneath a veneer of artificial intelligence."

She reared back, struck by the spiteful words.

When he said nothing more, she packed away her belongings with stiff, hasty movements and left without another word.

Severus slumped forward.

He knew that she would never return.

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**AN:** I think I picked the wrong year to do this ^^ . Thank you all for the continued support. The next chapter is in the validating queue, so please keep an eye out for it!

# The Professor and I

*Chapter 20 of 26*

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**X.**

He didn't know who was more surprised upon her return. Miss Granger or himself.

Over the next hour, she read to him in an increasingly stilted voice.

It pained him to see her floundering.

"—I apologise, Miss Granger," he interrupted, no longer able to tolerate the farce of companionship. "My words were uncalled for and I... I sincerely regret them." Apologising had never been his forte, and even now he found the words difficult to articulate.

She stopped abruptly, staring at the pages before her with frighteningly blank eyes.

Severus awaited her judgement, uneasiness simmering in the pit of his stomach.

"I believe my name is Hermione, sir," she responded quietly.

His gaze flew towards her, disbelief warring with hope.

Miss Granger – Hermione's – lips twitched, heralding the beginning of a secret smile.

A smile that put all smiles to shame.

# Severus and I, I

*Chapter 21 of 26*

A romantic drabble series based on Hermione Granger and Severus Snape's relationship post-war.

**I.**

"I hope those aren't what I think they are."

Hermione felt a small bubble of happiness pop in the centre of her belly.

When she had stepped into the dreary hospital room many months ago, she'd never dreamed that his resigned, amused tone of voice would become so precious to her.

She smiled innocently. "They aren't."

He scowled sceptically and eyed the top of her head. "Dare I ask, Mi-Hermione?"

The happiness spread upwards and outwards at the sound of her name on his lips.

"I think they suit me," she teased.

"I think not."

Hermione grinned and dutifully took off the grey bunny ears adorning her head.

"Happy Easter, Severus."

"It won't be happy unless you start reading," he grumbled.

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# Severus and I, II

*Chapter 22 of 26*

A romantic drabble series based on Hermione Granger and Severus Snape's relationship post-war.

## II.

“Checkmate.”

He huffed indignantly as she soundly trounced him at chess.

If Hermione thought that she was a bad player, then Severus was positively atrocious.

In her heart, she believed their lack of skill at the game was due to the pit-fall of being two logical, yet highly emotional people. It seemed that he too became attached to the marble pieces, in ways that other people could never understand.

Of course, she would never call Severus emotional to his face.

And although defeat in any game was a bitter pill to swallow, he always seemed to take his loss rather personally.

“It’s an idiotic game,” he declared resolutely, “for people with too much time on their hands.”

Seeing as he was bed-bound, Hermione didn’t point out the irony of his statement. She merely nodded in agreement and reminded herself never to play chess with the sour man again.

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## Severus and I, III

*Chapter 23 of 26*

A romantic drabble series based on Hermione Granger and Severus Snape’s relationship post-war.

## III.

The room was illuminated by dappled beams of sunlight.

A strange sense of warmth seemed to pervade the walls, and she knew intrinsically that it had something to do with him.

However, on one occasion, she caught him staring sideways, eyes longingly fixed on the small window behind her.

There was nothing to suggest his inner desire, but in that moment, Hermione was keenly aware (and ashamed) to note that he hadn’t been outside in nearly a year.

Bracing herself for a vitriolic response, she cleared her throat. “It’s a lovely day today, isn’t it?”

He grunted and shifted his eyes away from the window.

“Would you like to go outside, Severus?” The words tumbled out before she could stop them.

Instead of the anger she had expected, he tilted his head and took a moment to compose himself.

“I believe it would be best if I stayed in here, Hermione.”

Something stopped her from retorting. Perhaps it was the distressed furrow of his brow, or his dark, aching eyes.

Whatever it was, it made her want to climb into bed with him, hold him, and never let go.

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## Severus and I, IV

*Chapter 24 of 26*

A romantic drabble series based on Hermione Granger and Severus Snape’s relationship post-war.

## IV.

Severus looked positively furious when she entered the room with a wheel-chair in tow.

It didn’t help that he appeared utterly adorable with his bed-head and bleary eyes.

Looking at her watch, she had to concede that it was rather early in the morning.

"I know what you're thinking," she began sheepishly, before he could vent his wrath. "But we won't be anywhere near the magical populace, nor the magical world. I promise."

He glared at her mutinously.

Hermione continued, oblivious of the gathering storm clouds. "We could spend the day outside in London and no one will have to know!"

Seeing that he was beginning to waver, she added the final cherry. "And, I hear that Regent's Park is having their annual production of a Shakespeare play in their open amphitheatre. I think it's *King Lear*, this year."

He tried to look resigned, but she could see the thinly veiled pleasure glistening quietly beneath his eyes. "Very well... Hermione."

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**AN:** Once again, thanks to all the people still reading!

## Severus and I, V

*Chapter 25 of 26*

A romantic drabble series based on Hermione Granger and Severus Snape's relationship post-war.

**V.**

Childhood nostalgia trickled from the leaves of the trees: the aroma of the flowers, the hazy summer sun.

She looked at the man sitting rigidly beside her, eyes dancing around every nook and cranny for any perceived danger in the amphitheatre.

He wasn't used to lowering his guard, but neither was she. Especially after the fiasco of her seventh year. Always running, hiding... Afraid of the slightest shadow.

She could understand.

And yet... And yet, the slight curve of his lips alluded to his enjoyment. The rapturous turn of expression in his glittering eyes could not be disguised from her.

And she was grateful.

So grateful that he had been given a second, third, fourth chance to be the man he was destined to be.

Overcome with emotion, she took his fidgeting hand into hers and held on tightly. But not before bestowing a chaste, reverent kiss upon the curve of his pale cheek.

He didn't flinch, nor did he move away.

Nevertheless, in that moment, something irrevocable had shifted. Something intangible.

The day sang of beginnings.

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## Severus and I, VI

*Chapter 26 of 26*

A romantic drabble series based on Hermione Granger and Severus Snape's relationship post-war.

**VI.**

It took her a while to realise that he was staring at her rather oddly during the interval.

"What?"

He sneered and gestured at the unsightly glob of ice cream decorating the tip of her nose.

She looked down at it, becoming cross-eyed in the process. "Ooh."

"Oh, indeed." He looked away with an air of disdain, clearly flummoxed by her easy acceptance of the creamy substance marking her tanned face.

Hermione smiled serenely. "Does it bother you?"

"No," he snapped.

"Yes, it does."

"This conversation is over."

Hermione cast him a sly, sideways glance. "You know... You could always clean it off if it annoys you so much."

There was an extended moment of silence as Severus refused to acknowledge her.

He fidgeted restlessly before finding the adequate words.

"Do not tempt me, Miss Granger," he murmured quietly. Fiendishly.

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