

Familiarly Familiar

by debjunk

Hermione's new familiar seems oddly... familiar.

Oneshot

Chapter 1 of 1

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The raven cocked its head at her, as if he were arching an eyebrow. Hermione's eyes narrowed at the bird. Her new familiar had been given to her by an 'anonymous' friend. It had flown to her windowsill and pecked furiously until she'd let him in. The scroll he carried had explained that this 'friend' had thought that she'd needed a companion that would keep her on her toes. She had no idea what that was supposed to mean.

The bird tilted his head the other way. It almost seemed to frown at her. The scowl was oddly familiar.

"So, I suppose you have a name?"

"Caw."

"Your name is Caw?"

Although seemingly impossible, the bird scowled even more.

"Yes, you definitely remind me of someone I used to know, and he could fly, too."

It hadn't take Hermione long to figure there was something different about the bird. They had gotten along well, although he had seemed put out the first time she'd patted his head. After a while of repeating it, however, the raven had seemed to enjoy it. He had often leaned into her hand as she'd pet him. She'd found it curious that the raven enjoyed being perched on her shoulder, staring at her work when she'd brought it home, the two sitting in companionable silence while she worked.

This was one of those instances. Hermione was shocked, though as he tapped her on the top of her head when she made a mistake in her work. She sat back and motioned for the bird to move to the table. In a second, his dark eyes were regarding her.

"You're no ordinary bird," she stated.

The bird shook his head.

"Are you a bird at all?"

Another shake of the head.

"Are you a wizard?"

The bird nodded.

Hermione moved close to the raven, looking deep into his eyes. Her mind raced. Could it be? She was afraid to even ask.

"Are you... no it couldn't be. He died. I saw him die."

The bird began to flap his wings and caw furiously.

"No, you can't be! You're Professor Snape?"

The bird took flight, cawing all the while. It flew in a circle about her head several times before returning to the desk and nodding vigorously.

"Merlin, what happened?" Hermione asked incredulously. "How?" Realizing Professor Snape was in no condition to answer questions, she reached out and petted his head.

"Oh, Professor, I'm so sorry."

A look of determination filled her face. "I'll make this right. I'll find a way to turn you back, no matter how long it takes."

"Caw!"

She raced to her bookshelf and pulled out a book on spell reversals. She read throughout the night while the bird sat on her shoulder, never leaving her side.

Two weeks later:

Hermione burst into her flat. "Severus! Severus, I think I've found it!"

The bird flew at her from his perch by the window and landed on the sofa where she had just sat down.

"I found a spell that says it will counter any curse that has changed a human into an animal." She hesitated for a moment. "It does say the transformation is very painful."

"Caw! Caw!"

She patted his head and looked into his eyes. "You're sure you want me to try it?"

The bird nodded.

Hermione stood. "All right. I hope this works." She pointed her wand at the bird. Lifting the tip slightly, she looked him in the eyes once again. "I look forward to seeing you in your human form again, Severus."

Taking aim once again, the spell fell from her lips. A golden light flew from her wand and entered the bird's chest, knocking him against the back of the sofa. The raven began to writhe, and Hermione rushed to him, not sure whether to touch him or not. She watched as he began to elongate and take the form of a man... a naked man, she realized. She quickly grabbed a nearby blanket and covered him. The black feathers of the bird became long hair, and Hermione gasped when she recognized Severus Snape lying before her, moaning and shuddering in pain.

Rushing out of the room, she soon returned with a pain potion. Helping Severus to a sitting position, she eased the vial to his lips and assisted him in drinking it. After a few minutes, his tremors stopped, and he closed his eyes.

"Are you all right?" Hermione asked.

He gave a quick nod. It took him a few minutes before he could speak. "Bellatrix... stumbled into the shack looking for the Dark Lord... and found me. I... had taken an antivenin... prior to going to battle, and I was slowly regaining consciousness. She realized I was alive. She said... she said she wanted me to live long and suffer because she knew I'd deceived the Dark Lord. She'd always suspected me... even though she couldn't prove it.... She cast the spell and left me."

"It's been ten years, Severus."

Giving a brisk nod, he rose from the sofa.

"Where are you going?" Hermione asked in astonishment.

"I thank you... for your assistance. I wrote the note.... It took me a week, quill in beak, letter... by letter. I then delivered myself to you. After spending time with countless... wizards... who were oblivious, I thought I'd try someone intelligent to try to save me. I appreciate... your assistance. I'll be... leaving you in peace now."

"Severus?"

"Hmm?" he mumbled with barely a turn of his head.

"I..." She rose from the couch and moved herself in front of him. "I know you've been a bird the entire time you've been here, but I feel that we've formed a friendship of sorts. I'd like to continue that."

"You would?"

She nodded. "I find you intriguing. I always have."

Hope filled his eyes as he gazed at her. "I found that spending time with you was... enjoyable, even if I was only a bird."

She grinned then. "Well, come back and sit down. I'll get you something to put on. You can't sit in a blanket all day."

It didn't take long for him to be dressed in some transfigured black pants and a red shirt.

Hermione smirked. "Sorry," she apologized. "I couldn't help myself. The thought of dressing you in red was just too tempting."

Severus arched an eyebrow, but didn't glower. "I have always been fond of red," he muttered under his breath.

"What? Really?" Hermione gasped. "You really are full of surprises, aren't you, Severus Snape?" Her hand seemed to have a mind of its own as she found herself running her fingers through his hair, much like she would pet him when he was a bird.

His eyes met hers. "Sorry," she apologized as she jerked her hand back into her lap. She tried to look away, but his hand caught her chin and turned her face back to his.

"Your intelligence wasn't the only reason I chose you to help me change back. I just didn't think you would be interested in me."

She could barely find her voice. His stare was taking her breath away. "As I said," she whispered finally. "You've always intrigued me."

"And as you also said, I'm full of surprises." His lips claimed hers then, and she fully understood the message he'd delivered to her when he became her familiar.

The End

AN: Prompt by MuseAmusant: Hermione's new familiar seems oddly... familiar.

This is the first thing I've actually written (not just edited and put up on a site) in a LONG time, and I pushed myself to do it. Loved the prompt. Hope the story is worthy of it. I seem to be writing a lot about birds lately. :)