

Angels With Broken Wings

by felinefelixfelix

The war may have ended, but for some of its heroes there doesn't seem to be a happily ever after.

The Things That Get Overlooked

Chapter 1 of 9

The war may have ended, but for some of its heroes there doesn't seem to be a happily ever after.

Severus Snape was a broken man. He'd survived the snakebite, but he'd been left weak. His body had refrained from giving him the bill for all his years of abusing it while he remained active and otherwise healthy, but during his recovery from the snakebite, he'd been delivered that bill in great, painful detail. Or had it had to do with the venom itself? He didn't suppose it mattered. Now, although he was technically recovered, he was nearly useless. He had not returned to Hogwarts, had not wanted to, but instead lived alone and forgotten at Spinner's End.

He earned a decent sum by brewing difficult potions commissioned from him by shop owners, but the number of people commissioning from him was shrinking due to his long and unpredictable turnaround time. Most days he did not feel up to walking farther than the bathroom adjoining his bedroom, and so he only filled his orders on his good days, and there was no predicting how often those would come.

Apart from his handful of clients, nobody remembered that he existed. Nobody ever came to his house, not even salesmen. There was nobody to care that he spent the majority of his time in bed, or that he didn't eat very regularly. Nobody to notice that his stock of medicinal potions was running out.

He didn't really care. He'd lost his snark along with his ease of movement and his energy. He was resigned to his current life because it would take too much energy to be bothered by anything.

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Hermione was miserable. At the time, it had seemed a good idea to be Ron's girlfriend. After all, they'd grown up together and been by each other's sides through the war, and he'd said that he loved her. She supposed that she'd loved him too.

But they were adults now. They weren't the schoolchildren who'd fallen in love anymore. Had it ever really been love anyway? She wasn't sure they'd known what love was back then. In any case, they were adults now, looking to move on with their lives. Their plans for the future didn't mesh in the slightest. Ron wanted to settle down, get married, come home to a housewife and a flock of children after work each day. Hermione wasn't really sure what she wanted, but she'd made it abundantly clear that she wasn't a broodmare and that she intended to hold a job equal or better than that of whatever man happened to be in her life at the time. Marriage? Maybe someday if it felt right, which it didn't just yet. Children? Probably not. Maybe one or two later if it didn't interfere too much with her career. She was waiting for things to feel right before she settled down to anything, and she still hadn't found that right place for her.

It had started with a slap for "refusing to compromise" when she'd told Ron that she didn't want the sort of life that he did and maybe they ought to reconsider things. It had continued to belittlement and throwing things and more blows as she continued to resist.

Ron (that arse) had tampered with her birth control, believing that if he could get her pregnant, he'd have his way and they'd marry and he'd tame her into a housewitch. Instead, she had missed her period, taken a pregnancy test, and gotten an abortion, all without saying a word about it to him. He had no need to know that she'd been

pregnant at all and would be happier if he didn't know.

But he did know. He'd been performing a pregnancy test charm on her while she was asleep and had been gloating quietly about the success of his plan while he waited for her to find out and break the news to him. When he again spotted dirty feminine products in the bathroom waste bin, he was furious.

A New Friendship

Chapter 2 of 9

Two broken people stumble across one another and maybe a new chance for things to change.

Hermione was lost and homeless. Everything she owned was in her beaded bag. After the the screaming and the threats and the blows (that complete arse, how dare he tamper with her birth control), she had Apparated to a random place. She didn't dare go anywhere Ron might suspect her to be, so she had visualized a photo of a mill that she had seen in a book, neither remembering nor caring where it was, and Apparated there.

The mill was crumbling, and so were the dwellings near it. That part of the city was nearly a ghost town, but that was just as well. The next thing to do was to find a magical dwelling and borrow their Floo to contact people she knew and ask about a safe place to stay. If someone asked where she was, she could honestly say she didn't know. She cast a spell to find traces of magic and set out down the deserted streets.

Severus was having one of his good days. He'd been able to drag himself out of bed, cook a decent brunch, and get some brewing done. It helped that he'd charmed the stairs to his basement laboratory to act as a Muggle escalator. Stairs had been a real obstacle to getting work done in recent months due to a previously injured leg that had decided to permanently stiffen up at some point while he recuperated from the snakebite. He was just sealing the last bottle when he heard the banging on the front door.

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Half an hour of roaming the neighborhood later, Hermione came upon a house that appeared to be warded. Probably occupied, then. She knocked on the front door.

She had almost given up on the house when five minutes had passed after her knock without any sign of life, but then there was a noise within. Footsteps? Maybe? Yes! The footsteps were coming closer to the door, closer, closer...

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"Miss Granger?" He sounded shocked to see her, and why wouldn't he be? A former student who'd never liked him showing up on his doorstep looking like she'd been dragged through hell and back.

"Professor Snape?" He looked terrible. He was far too thin with the pale look about him of someone who had been sick for a very long time and leaning on a cane.

They stared at one another for a long moment, before he moved aside. "Well, come in Miss Granger, you're letting the cold air in."

She hurriedly scooted in. "Sir, I don't mean to inconvenience you. If I could use your Floo to contact people about a place for me to stay..."

He surveyed her mussed clothing and tearstained cheeks knowingly. "I am not on the Floo network. However, you may stay here if you wish. My wards will not let anybody in who means harm to an occupant of the house, so Mr. Weasley will not find you here."

"How...?"

"I know him and I know you. Due to my poor health, I will have to ask you to do more than your share of work around the house should you choose to stay here. But you may have the spare room upstairs, and you should feel free to enjoy the library at your leisure."

"Thank you sir." She hesitated a moment. "I think I will stay a bit. If I can be of help to you while I am figuring out how to piece back together my own life..."

He looked over her with a softer expression than she had seen on him before. "Come, then. I am tired, and if you help me to clean up my lab I can return to bed sooner."

Mixing Messages

Chapter 3 of 9

Hermione can't figure out quite what to think of this arrangement.

Hermione looked up from her book and noticed that it was seven. A peek into Severus's bedroom showed him apparently dozing. She proceeded into the kitchen and found no signs that any cooking had been done since morning, so she set to exploring the cupboards for something for supper.

"Sir?"

Severus woke from his doze and looked up at the young woman standing in his doorway, trying to remember why she was there.

"I made dinner. Will you be joining me at the table, or would you like me to bring you in a tray?" She said the last part almost sarcastically. He would come to the table, he

was too prideful to be treated like an invalid. Besides, he didn't expect her to wait on him, did he?

He blinked sleepily a few times, the events of the afternoon coming back to him along with his many aches and pains. "Err. Yes. Yes, I think a tray would be best. Thank you, Miss Granger."

Hermione was torn between curiosity and spitting in his food. The nerve of him, asking for supper in bed! Well, he had said his health was poor... But he'd been up and walking around earlier in the day! But he'd had a cane... But she'd seen no bandages or anything, that was his normal state of being rather than an injury so there was no use coddling it; surely, he could manage the walk to the kitchen! No, his health was poor, and judging by the cleanup in his lab, he'd done a reasonable amount of brewing that day. He likely had overexerted himself; he had been asleep when she had looked in on him after all. She could take pity on him just this once.

"Supper is served." Hermione set the tray to floating over his bed. He was starting to think he'd enjoy having her there. It at least meant he'd get food on a regular basis. He gingerly struggled to push himself into an upright position without causing himself more pain than he had to. It was nothing new to him, but she was giving him an odd look. Perhaps having her around to see him like this wouldn't be so great after all.

He glared. "There is no need to stare at me like I'm some circus freak, Miss Granger." She recoiled as if kicked, and he finally managed to get himself into an upright position and dig into his supper. She really was a decent cook.

After washing the dishes, annoyed at her host to no end, Hermione decided to explore the house. He hadn't given her permission, but if he didn't like it, she supposed she'd find out if he really was as ill as he claimed by the strength of his reaction. The old bat, demanding supper in bed and then snapping at her for looking at him funny.

The second floor was dusty, as if no one had been up there in quite some time. At the top of the stairs was a laundry chute. She opened the door across from it and thought she'd died and gone to heaven. It was a library that seemed to run the length of the house, large windows every few feet, books covering every section of wall not occupied by a window. There were long wooden tables, plump armchairs, and a couch dotted around the room. She ventured farther down the room and found that it was L-shaped and ran the length of the adjoining side as well. He'd said she could have use of this glorious room, and that might even make it worth putting up with him.

She left the library, deciding she'd return as soon as her exploration was complete, and poked her head in the room down the next hall.

It was just a bathroom. The next room over was storage for linens and old robes, but the one next to it was a bedroom. Undoubtedly the "spare room upstairs" he'd said she could have, as it was the last door. It was decorated in Slytherin colors, unlike the rest of the house, and had a faded poster of a rock band pasted to the wall and an old set of Slytherin Quidditch robes in the closet. Severus's old room, most likely. It was somewhat smaller than the one he was using now, so he probably had moved into the master bedroom at some point after his parents' deaths. The whole second floor was absurdly dusty, so she wondered if the move had been because he didn't feel well enough to climb the stairs day after day. She banished the dust from the bedroom and bathroom and left her beaded bag on the bed while she went to find some bedtime reading in the library.

Dawning Comprehension

Chapter 4 of 9

Severus has a bad day. Hermione starts to feel a little sorry for him.

The next morning dawned cold, damp, and stormy. Severus woke feeling so stiff and achy, he could barely breathe, let alone move. He fumbled for his wand to *Accio* potions, blankets, and a hot water bottle, but only managed to knock it off the nightstand and onto the floor. Bugger. He couldn't reach it there, not as stiff as he was.

Hermione was not in the best of moods. The weather didn't help any with her cramps, the house was so quiet that the stormy weather felt depressing rather than cozy, and once again there was no sign that any cooking had taken place. It seemed she would have to play house-elf to him if she wanted food.

"Breakfast is in the kitchen." She turned and walked away from his room briskly. Damned if she'd be waiting on him again! But as she left he called her back.

"Hermione, wait a minute." She wouldn't have stopped if she hadn't been so surprised to hear him use her given name. "Could you please see if there are any more vials of dark purple potion? If they're not in the suite bathroom, check the pantry and the lab."

There was no dark purple potion, not in any sort of container in any of the places. It didn't escape her notice that he nearly whimpered when she told him, or that he was paler than usual. "It's medicine, isn't it?" she guessed. "What is it? How are you feeling? Maybe there's something to do to relieve your symptoms while I brew you more of it."

"Essence of Willow Pain Elixir."

She noticed that his breathing was shallow.

"Everything hurts. Moving feels like ripping open cuts. I ache all over, every inch of me. I would have Summoned blankets and a hot water bottle, but I dropped my wand and I can't reach it."

She retrieved his wand and Summoned the items.

She had missed brewing while living in a tiny flat with no place to do it. It was a calming activity, and for the first time since the end of the war, she felt needed. Nor was she still mad at her new housemate. He was genuinely unwell, and he needed her assistance. He probably hated needing it, but he did, and she was able to help and that felt good.

"When did this start?" She handed him a vial of the fresh batch of potion. "There must be something to be done for it besides just managing the pain."

He gulped it down with some relief. "While recovering from the snakebite. The pains aren't new. Everywhere I've been injured in the past hurts now."

"I'll do some research. In the meantime, is there any pattern you've noticed to how bad the pain is? Is it worse after spending time in a certain position? Does the weather have any effect? What about different foods?"

"Still at it with the questions, I see. Yes, damp weather makes it worse."

"Have you seen a Healer about it? What did they say?"

"I have no Floo connection, and I'm not about to attempt travel when I'm not feeling well." He had taken on an expression like a sulky little boy. She ignored it.

"Hold still a moment." She cast a diagnostic spell and surveyed the rainbow of colors glowing across his skin. "I've never used that before, but it looks like it worked. Do those red spots correspond to where it hurts?"

He looked down. "Yes."

"Well, according to what I've read about this spell, it looks to me like something is attacking all the scar tissue in your body. That sounds vaguely familiar. There has to be something about it in the literature." She lifted the spell, already distracted by the prospect of research. "I'm off to run an errand, and then I'll be in the library doing research if you need anything."

Starting Point

Chapter 5 of 9

Hermione does her best to make Severus more comfortable and then gives some thought to her plan of attack.

"What is that contraption?" Hermione was lugging a large cardboard box into his room.

She beamed at him. "It's a dehumidifier! It'll take the dampness out of the air, and since you said damp weather makes you feel worse, taking the dampness out of the air should make you feel better!"

Well, he couldn't argue with that logic. "It appears to be a Muggle creation."

"It is. But I noticed that your house was wired for electricity, and I know a spell that'll allow appliances to work in the presence of magic, so it should be alright." She looked rather pleased with herself.

Had she still been his student, he would have given her a month of detention for the steady stream of swearwords issuing from her mouth as she assembled the machine. Clearly she hadn't tried to assemble a Muggle gadget by hand for a very long time. As it was, he just watched with amusement.

Half an hour and several *Reparos* later, the machine came to life and Hermione bounded to her feet victoriously. "All set. I'll be doing research if you need me!"

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Hermione settled down in a window seat in the library, a notebook propped on her knees, and stared out into the lightning-filled sky. It was evident how much pain her host was in, and that bothered her. It bothered her a lot. This was Professor Snape, after all, the Great Evil Bat of the Dungeons. He wasn't supposed to be an invalid! He was supposed to still be sweeping around being an utter arse to everybody but at the same time making her feel safe by being so completely in control at all times. But he wasn't. Everything had changed with the end of the war.

Inflamed scar tissue. That was a starting point. What could cause it? The venom, obviously. But that couldn't still be in his bloodstream, could it? Years had passed.

Find out if venom still in bloodstream.

She frowned at the one item on her list. What if it was? A potion to neutralize it, probably, or a way to filter his blood. The latter was a scary idea, one she wasn't willing to try to do herself, meaning she'd have to persuade him to see a Healer.

If yes, how to get it out?

And if it wasn't? What could it have done that would cause these lasting effects? Something was attacking all the scar tissue in his body. Maybe it wasn't snake venom. It could be environmental, something toxic in the house getting into the air or food. In which case, she could end up in the same state. And he did have enemies still, she was certain of that. Someone could be poisoning him.

If no, see if I start developing symptoms and test him for other poisons.

She grimaced at the obvious next step. She didn't fancy doing a blood test on him, even if he seemed unlikely to turn her into anything too unpleasant at present.

Another Weakness

Chapter 6 of 9

Severus takes the news surprisingly peacefully.

To his surprise, Severus felt slightly better after an afternoon with the contraption running. It wasn't a huge difference, but he definitely felt less stiff than when he woke up.

Hermione brought in two trays this time, pulling up a chair to join him. They ate quietly for a minute before Hermione brought up what was on her mind.

"I have two guesses on what's wrong. Something is attacking all your scar tissue, and it's probably either snake venom or an environmental toxin. The venom *shouldn't* still be in your system, but since we don't really know much about Nagini it could be."

"So what's the next step in your research?"

"A blood test would be the most productive." She noticed that he paled slightly. "Are... are you scared of needles?"

He ignored the question. "Do you *really* think that's necessary?"

"Yes. Absolutely. There is something in your bloodstream that shouldn't be. We need to know what it is so that we can get rid of it." He opened his mouth as if to protest, but she shot him a look. "Unless of course you'd rather stay like this." He shut his mouth again, looking almost sulky. "That's what I thought. We'll do it when your potion wears off in a couple of hours. I'm perfectly capable of doing it myself – I learned a lot of basic medical things helping after the battle – but we can get a Healer if you'd rather."

"No... You'll do fine I'm sure." He hated the idea, but she'd already seen him weak, so that was better than a stranger, wasn't it? And damn it, he *was* scared of needles. They reminded him a little too much of snake fangs these days. He wished he could take a Calming Draught beforehand, but no, potions in his system could mess up the results of the blood test. Blast it all to hell!

Hermione was speaking again and he forced himself to listen. Gryffindor though she was, the girl had a knack for coming up with good ideas. Not that he'd admit it, of course.

"Your lab is rather well-stocked, so I shouldn't need to go and get anything before doing the blood test. But while we're waiting for that pain potion to wear off, I'd like to run a few more diagnostics on you, if that's alright. It can't hurt to have a little more information."

He nodded a little stiffly. "Very well."

With a wave of her wand, a quill and parchment appeared in the air by his bed, scribbling down figures. Hermione frowned at it.

"That's not good," she said, more to herself than to him. "I suppose it's to be expected of course..." She trailed off, then paused a moment and addressed him. "I don't like the looks of your blood pressure. I think I saw some Blood Replenishing Potion downstairs. Let's get some of that into you and see if we can't improve it."

True to her word, Hermione was back within minutes with a vial for him. "Here, take this. It's the last vial, but I'm going to make up a fresh batch while we wait for the pain potion to wear off. Until then, I'll be in the lab if you need me."

Author's Note: While this story is not done yet, please take the time to [click here to tell me which story you'd like to see me post next](#)! Thanks!

Easier Than He Thought

Chapter 7 of 9

Our heroes survive the nasty old blood test without real damage.

The deep stiffness and pain crept back into his body much too quickly for Severus's comfort. The Blood-Replenishing Potion had done its job admirably, and he felt significantly more alert, but at the moment that wasn't a good thing. It meant he had far too much energy to spend fretting about what was to come.

It was silly of him to fear needles. He'd been a spy and a Death Eater, for fuck's sake. He'd done far scarier things than allow a tiny piece of metal to puncture his skin. Granted, that *had* been before he'd had his throat ripped out by a bloody great snake. With fangs. Big fangs. Big terrifying venomous fangs that still haunted his nightmares. Fangs like gigantic needles. Maybe it wasn't so silly, after all. He didn't like the idea of anything puncturing his skin, and after that, didn't he have a right to feel that way? He was *traumatized*, after all. He had a *right* to be a coward this once.

Right on time, Hermione showed up at his bedside with the empty syringe and a fresh vial of his pain potion. He made a swipe for the vial, but she easily stepped out of his reach.

"No, you don't. Not until I get that blood sample. And don't even think about Summoning it." She cast the diagnostic spell again. "Alright. It looks like that Blood-Replenishing Potion did what it should." She raised an eyebrow. "Your pulse is very fast though. You *are* scared of needles, huh?"

He gave her his best glare. She appeared immune to it.

She uncapped the needle. "Okay, just lie back and take deep breaths. The calmer you can make yourself, the quicker and easier this will be for us both. "

He obeyed her, trying to tap into his Occlumency skills to block out what was happening. This fear did not exist. There was nothing being forced through his skin. The young woman by his bedside was holding onto his arm for a completely different reason. Yes. Appropriate memories to the front, bad ones to the back. Potions were appropriate memories. Yes. How to brew a Calming Draught. First step was to add a tablespoon of powdered moonstone to the juice of five sopophorous beans...

Hermione chuckled under her breath as sealed her sample. The Evil Bat of the Dungeons really was terrified of a little needle! She held out the vial of the painkiller to him, schooling her face straight.

"All done, sir. Here you go. Unless you need anything first, I'm headed to the lab to analyze this."

He accepted the vial gratefully, still pale as a ghost. "I'll be fine."

Experiments

Chapter 8 of 9

Severus's test results come back and they're not what either of them expected.

When Severus woke the next morning, it was to find a breakfast tray and a vial of pain potion floating by his bed. He downed the potion and thoughtfully munched on his toast while he mulled over recent events.

Having the girl there really had been a blessing, after all. It meant regular meals and some improvement in his health. The dehumidifier and Blood-Replenishing Potion had both noticeably improved his condition. Strokes of genius, really. He certainly wouldn't have thought of them himself. And irritating as she had been as a student, Severus appreciated her quick mind and work ethic. She said she thought herself on the right track to finding the source of his ailment, and he believed her. He wouldn't have felt comfortable saying as much to her, but she might well be the best possible person to have there helping him.

But why was she there? She had come seeking use of a Floo after some unpleasant event between her and Weasley, but she'd stayed after learning that he did not have one, and several days later she was still there. Why was an attractive and talented young witch not only willingly staying in his house, but spending all her time trying to help him? Him, of all people. He wasn't exactly attractive and there was no denying that he was an unpleasant person. He didn't understand it at all.

Hermione was adding stain to a fourth slide when the charmed stairs to the laboratory creaked into motion again.

"Professor! You're up and about!"

"Anything else obvious you'd like to point out?" He paused a moment. "I seem to be having one of my better days." He limped over to the bench where her cauldrons sat and peered into them. "What have you found?"

She scrambled to join him. "I've run every test for toxins that I know and several that I found in your library. They've all come up negative. All the ingredients ~~seemed~~ fresh, but I could have been mistaken..."

"Doubtful. I have been careful about maintaining my stores."

She nodded, still looking nervous. "There was one thing..."

"Do tell."

"Your blood doesn't look quite right under a microscope. I don't pretend to be an expert on the composition of blood, but the cell types don't seem to be in the usual proportion. I've prepared several slides now to make sure it wasn't a fluke. They're all the same."

He looked curious. "Let me take a look." He peered through the microscope, and indeed something wasn't quite normal. "That isn't typical. You are correct. But if nothing showed up as toxins, then it must be something originating from my own body."

"Oh my God." Hermione was frozen wide-eyed. "I think... What if... Why didn't I consider that before?" She turned and sprinted up the moving stairs. Above him Severus could hear her pounding up the stairs to the second floor.

A Happy Ending After All

Chapter 9 of 9

Our heroes find happiness.

While Severus took advantage of feeling reasonably well to brew for his clients, Hermione spent the rest of the morning going back and forth between her book, the microscope, and her notes. After a hasty lunch, she dressed in Muggle clothes and went out.

Just as Severus had finished pulling together a rough dinner and was wondering whether he would be eating alone, Hermione returned carrying several packages and looking smug.

"Take these." She handed him several pills. "If I'm wrong, they shouldn't do much damage, but if I'm right, you'll start feeling better."

He nearly dropped them. "You think you've found the problem?"

She nodded, looking again like the over-eager 11-year-old who had first entered his classroom. "You have an autoimmune disease. Your immune system thinks that all the scar tissue in your body—and you have a lot of it—is an intruder and is attacking it and causing internal bleeding as well as pain. It's probably a side effect of the venom. I'm putting you on a fairly standard Muggle prescription for this sort of thing, and we'll tweak it as needed."

Relief washed over him. His pain might be nearly over.

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Epilogue:

"Detention, Robbins, and twenty points from Gryffindor. If you cannot grasp simple laboratory procedure, you should not be in an advanced Potions class."

Just outside the door Hermione and Minerva traded looks and decided it was probably a bad time to enter. They had persuaded Severus to come in for a few hours a week to teach a Potions elective for the upper year students hoping to train as Healers, and he was in fine form. These students had never before had him but had heard plenty

of (mostly exaggerated) stories about him, and he was relishing their fear. Although he still used a cane much of the time and could no longer swoop around *quite* as impressively, he still had quite a presence.

"Tea?"

"Don't mind if I do. It sounds like he'll be here a while yet cleaning up whatever just exploded."

"How *is* business going?"

"Oh it's booming. With both of us to brew, we're filling so many orders that we had to put another extension charm on the basement to fit all the batches of Wolfsbane we have simmering at a time."

Author's Note Yup, this story is over. I ran out of inspiration for it. Please [click here to tell me which of my WIPs you want to see next](#)