

I Know What You Do In The Dungeons

by buttercup

A student's jealous obsession with Hermione Granger leads to attempted murder, a mysterious death, and may reveal a secret that would destroy Hermione and Severus.

Winner: Multifaceted Award for Best Original Character

Prologue

Chapter 1 of 2

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Everything you recognize belongs to JKRowling. Everything else belongs to me. I'm not making any money from this. ~sob~

He'd killed a student.

Severus Snape sat in Albus Dumbledore's office with his head in his hands and tried to figure out how it happened. It was just a Petrificus Totalus; she shouldn't be dead. She should be in a carriage to Hogsmeade, on her way home after being expelled.

It shouldn't have killed her.

"Severus," Dumbledore said seriously, "is there anything else I need to know?"

"I don't know what else there is to say," came his anguished reply. "I saw her attacking Miss Granger in the second floor corridor while I was on rounds. I cast an Expelliarmus and disarmed them both. I cast the Petrificus Totalus when Miss Tilly drew a knife on Miss Granger. I removed Miss Granger to a safe distance, and when I released Miss Tilly she fell down dead. I have no explanation, Albus."

"I don't have one either, Severus," Albus replied wearily. "Miss Granger has confirmed your version of the event, and the Aurors have examined your wand with the Priori Incantatum. Their findings also support your story."

"I already know I'm telling the truth," Severus snapped at the Headmaster. "What I don't know is why this happened! Is anyone doing anything to find out why this student is laying in the hospital wing dead, apparently by my hand?"

"Rest assured, Severus. A complete investigation will be conducted, and we will get to the bottom of this," Albus promised. "In the meantime, unfortunately, I must relieve you of your classroom duties until this mystery is solved. You are, of course, free to use your laboratory to pursue your personal research."

Severus could tell from the Headmaster's tone that there was an unspoken message in his last words, but he was too rattled to discern what it was. He didn't want to be in

Albus' office. He wanted more than anything else to be in his quarters with Hermione's comforting arms around him. He wanted to hear her soothing voice whispering to him, telling him that everything was going to be all right.

That was impossible now. He could not afford to have his clandestine meetings with Hermione Granger discovered. His credibility was already strained to the limit by his status as a former Death Eater; if his relationship with the Head Girl was exposed, his trip to Azkaban was assured.

He'd killed a student.

"May I make a request, Severus?"

"Yes?" Severus said, looking up at the Headmaster with the absent expression of a man who was interrupted while in deep thought.

"This book was found near Gryffindor Tower. It appears blank and harmless, but after our experience with Tom Riddle's Diary, I think it would be prudent to examine it thoroughly. Since you are currently our foremost expert in the Dark Arts, and you now have time on your hands, I was hoping that you would agree to investigate this for me."

Severus looked at Albus incredulously. Did the doddering old man really think he needed some insipid, busy work to occupy him during his in-house incarceration? Severus sighed deeply and reconsidered his position. It was only because of Albus' intercession that he was awaiting the results of the investigation at Hogwarts instead of Azkaban.

"Fine," Severus said shortly as he took the book from Albus. "May I go now?"

"Of course," Albus said, releasing him.

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The walk from the Headmaster's office to the dungeons was the longest of Severus' entire life. His stern countenance, billowing robes and confident stride always inspired a healthy respect from the student body; now it inspired panic. Severus was taken aback that the change bothered him as much as it did. He was not a man who generally required the approval of others, least of all the students. He entered his personal quarters and leaned heavily against the door as he closed it behind him. He shed his outer robes and his boots, settled into a chair in front of the fire, and pondered his next move while nursing a large tumbler of Firewhiskey.

His reverie was disturbed by the sound of someone quietly entering his quarters. The wards were set to admit only two people besides himself: his mentor and friend, Albus Dumbledore, and Hermione Granger, his student, his lover, and his most closely held secret.

"Severus," said Hermione, rushing to his side.

"You can't be here, Hermione. It's too risky for both of us."

"I know," said Hermione with resignation, "but I had to see you. I was very careful. What are they going to do to you?"

"I am relieved of my teaching duties until the investigation is concluded. What happens after that is anyone's guess," he replied dolefully. He pulled her into his lap and held her close. "Whatever they do, it will be a small price to pay for your life. She wanted to kill you." He felt Hermione shudder in his arms.

"Do you know why Miss Tilly attacked you?"

"No! I barely knew her," she said, exasperated. The same question had been plaguing her since the incident. She knew Hyacinth Tilly only well enough to put a face with the name. Other than that, she didn't know anything about her. "Honestly, Severus. I have no idea."

"I see. I want you to go now Hermione, and I don't want you to come back until this matter is settled. If you think of anything that you feel I need to know, owl me. Send word through Potter if you have to. Just stay away."

"I graduate in three weeks. Can we be together then?"

"If the investigation is concluded favorably, perhaps. Public knowledge of our relationship, even when it is permitted, could complicate things for me," he answered.

"But you didn't do anything wrong! They know that!" Hermione was beginning to become unglued.

"Hermione," said Severus, taking her face in his hands, "this mark on my arm makes me guilty until proven innocent. There are so many unanswered questions, I would suspect me. The best way for you to help me is to stay away." His face softened. "It won't be forever."

"You're right," Hermione conceded as she rose to leave. "Is there anything I can do to help, in addition to staying away?"

"Cooperate with the Aurors and tell the truth. I would never ask you to lie, but please, don't volunteer any information about us," Severus said as he walked her to the door. "Everything will be fine."

He lifted her small chin with his fingertips and gazed into her big, brown eyes before lowering his mouth to hers in a passionate kiss.

"Good-bye for now, Hermione"

"Good-bye Severus," she said as she disappeared under Harry's invisibility cloak.

Severus stood by his open door until he was reasonably sure that she had left the area. There was no way to really tell; she had seven years of experience skulking around under Potter's cloak and had the stealth of an Auror. Once again he found himself leaning heavily against his door, wondering what he was supposed to do with his time. He had lived alone in the dungeons for years, but never felt lonely until just now.

He returned to his seat by the fire and reclaimed his whiskey. Having nothing else to do, he picked up the book Albus gave him to investigate and turned it over in his hands. It didn't look like much. It was a simple burgundy leather journal. There were no markings of any kind on the cover or on the pages in between. He wondered why Albus gave the book a second thought.

Severus held to the notion that the simplest solution to a problem was usually the best. In that vein, he took his wand and cast a basic revealing spell on the book. He didn't expect anything to happen and nearly dropped the book when gold embossed lettering appeared on the cover.

Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry

7th Year Memories

Of

Hyacinth Mary Tilly

Severus' eyes narrowed and his mind began to sharpen with purpose. There had to be a reason Albus gave this book to him, rather than the Aurors. He moved to his desk, where he did his clearest thinking, and began to read.

Chapter 1: September

Chapter 2 of 2

A student's jealous obsession with Hermione Granger leads to attempted murder, a mysterious death, and may reveal a secret that would destroy Hermione and Severus.

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Chapter 1 - September

September 5th

Harry and I met in the Owlery today. I longed to tell him how much I missed him over the summer holidays, but didn't because I didn't want to add guilt to the burdens he has to bear. A good girlfriend doesn't nag, and I'm a good girlfriend. I accept that Harry wants to keep our relationship a secret. That's why I don't complain when he doesn't write to me during breaks or talk to me in the common room. That's why I don't make a scene when he flirts with a pretty girl. I know he's only keeping up appearances. The Owlery is our special place.

Some people think that Hermione Granger is Harry's girlfriend because he wrapped his cloak around her during the boat ride to the castle. I know better. He was just keeping up appearances. Hermione Granger would not be a good girlfriend. She nags him about his schoolwork. She nags him about getting into mischief with Ron. She nags him about spending too much time on Quidditch. A good girlfriend doesn't nag. Hermione Granger would be a very bad girlfriend. She's just a big toothed, bushy haired bitch, who'd do well to leave my boyfriend alone.

Harry came to me today when I was taking care of Hedwig. Our owl is the most beautiful at Hogwarts. She only lets me and Harry handle her. Harry loves the way I take such good care of her.

When he saw me, he gave me that quirky little smile that he only gives to me. It just makes me melt!

Harry told me that he was sending a letter to Professor Lupin. I think it's so wonderful that Harry secretly writes to the old DADA professor after he got sacked for lying about being a werewolf. Most people wouldn't be caught dead talking to a werewolf, but my Harry is so brave and compassionate. Poor, lonely Professor Lupin is lucky to have a friend like my Harry.

I'm so happy that Harry trusts me so much that he shares his secrets with me. Harry tells me everything. A good girlfriend never tells her boyfriend's secrets and Harry's secret friendship with a lonely werewolf is safe with me. Harry was in a hurry, so he sent off his letter and promised to meet me later. I can hardly wait until he comes to Owlery again!

~**~***~

"Poor, lonely Lupin, indeed."

Severus nearly spewed the tea he was sipping all over the diary when he read that bit of the entry. Many people were openly friendly with Lupin. The werewolf had been working for Ollivander and shagging the old man's granddaughter for a bit over a year when Miss Tilly wrote the entry. Lupin could hardly be described as either poor or lonely. He wondered if Potter was lying to Miss Tilly or if she was making up the details of her relationship with Potter. It was an important clue to her state of mind.

'Big toothed, bushy haired bitch? Bah!'

He found her references to Hermione disturbing. Hermione wasn't beautiful in the classical sense, but she had qualities that he found stunning. It didn't surprise him that those qualities were completely beyond the comprehension of the insipid Miss Tilly.

Severus thumbed through the diary and saw that there were at least a hundred more pages filled with the troubled ramblings of the gawky adolescent. He doubted he would have made it more than halfway through the first entry if his life didn't depend on gleaning something useful from the girl's delusional notations. He wondered if all eighteen-year-old girls were focused on such trivial pursuits. Hermione was his only frame of reference, and she was certainly more well rounded than Miss Tilly; Hermione was surely mature beyond her years.

His heart sank when he thought about Hermione. He'd sent her away less than an hour ago, and already he missed her quick wit, discerning intellect, and insatiable curiosity. He would be lying if he didn't admit to also missing her less cerebral virtues.

His breath caught, and he felt himself rousing as he thought about the Hermione only he knew. Her small breasts, so responsive to his touch... the smell of her hair... her small hands stroking him, at first hesitantly, now confidently... the way their bodies fit together, so tight, hot and wet... the gorgeous expression on her face when he gave her pleasure --

'Focus, damn it!' Severus reprimanded himself. This was no time to be pining away like a lovesick schoolboy. He took a sip of his tea and delved back into the diary.

~**~***~

September 18th

Harry hasn't been back to the Owlery, and I know why. That bushy haired bitch, Granger, won't let him out of her sight! She's always harping on him about his schoolwork. NEWTs are almost a whole school year away and she's already nagging him about studying for them. Harry and Ron were talking about the Quidditch season in the common room last night, and she actually yelled at them for being so caught up in unimportant things. I would never behave like that. A good girlfriend doesn't nag.

Quidditch unimportant? How can she call herself his friend and say something like that? Doesn't she know how important Quidditch is to Harry? He was the youngest Seeker in a century, and he's the best Seeker EVER! When she says Quidditch isn't important, she's really saying that HE isn't important. Hermione is a very bad friend. The only reason Harry and I tolerate her is because he needs her help to stay on top of his marks. He's so busy being the greatest Seeker and fighting You-Know-Who that he needs a little extra help. I'd love to give her a piece of my mind, but I can't because that would give away Harry's secret

about me. A good girlfriend always keeps her boyfriend's secrets.

I'm sure Harry will come to the Owlery as soon as he can get away from Granger's constant surveillance. I wonder if Harry misses me as much as I miss him.

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"Somehow I doubt it, Miss Tilly," Severus said, in answer to her question.

The girl was obsessed with Potter. He found the entire notion of a female aching for 'the boy-who-lived-to-torment-him' nauseating. He supposed there was no accounting for taste. His musings on the fickle nature of female attraction was interrupted by a knock on his chamber door.

"Enter," Severus called out as he tucked the diary safely away in his desk drawer.

"Watcher, Severus," said Tonks with uncharacteristic seriousness as she entered his chambers. "Do you have time to answer a few questions for me?"

"Time is something I now have in abundance," he answered ruefully. "What would you like to know?"

"How well did you know Miss Tilly?" Tonks asked, taking a seat in front of his desk.

Severus shook his head at the irony of their positions. Generally, the person sitting in her chair was an errant student, squirming as he interrogated them. Now he was the one being interrogated, and he didn't like it.

"She was an unexceptional student. I only knew her well enough to put her face with her name." Severus became uneasy when he saw that his answer concerned Tonks.

"Those were the exact words that Hermione used to describe her relationship with Miss Tilly," Tonks observed.

'Sloppy! Damn sloppy, Snape!' Severus reprimanded himself. He knew Tonks wasn't sorted into Ravenclaw for nothing. Her frivolous and clumsy manner hid a keen intellect. He trusted her to be fair with him, but he knew that she would uphold her responsibilities as an Auror. If he continued to make mistakes like the one he just made, she would have him moved to Azkaban in a heartbeat.

"I wouldn't know," Severus answered with a practiced aloofness that he hoped would allay her suspicions. "Have you been able to determine Miss Tilly's motives for attacking Miss Granger?"

"Not yet," Tonks answered. "I can't find anyone who was close enough to her to tell me much about her."

"What is there to know? What does any silly eighteen-year-old girl think about?" asked Severus, in a subtle attempt steer Tonks' investigation in the right direction.

"I don't know. Eighteen-year-old boys, I suppose," Tonks said with a laugh.

"Perhaps it would be prudent to interview the boys closest to Miss Granger again," Severus suggested. "They may know more than they think they do."

"Good point," Tonks conceded. "That would be Harry and Ron I'm guessing. I'll get right on it."

"May I accompany you when you question them?" Severus wanted to compare Harry's interpretation of events to Miss Tilly's. It would be useful to know to what extent the diary corresponded with reality.

"I don't know about that. I don't think it will be to your advantage to have any irregularities in the investigation. Not everyone trusts in your innocence as I do."

"Please, Tonks," Severus asked with sincere humility, "my life is on the line. I can't just sit here and do nothing while others determine my fate. Please, just let me observe."

Tonks sighed deeply and considered his request.

"I don't suppose there would be any harm in you observing the questioning so long as you don't interfere," she reluctantly agreed. "You can come with me as long as you leave your wand behind."

"You know my wand isn't good for much more than opening my door and flushing the loo," he said with a slightly humorous sneer. "You put the wards on it yourself."

"So I did," she laughed, "but you're a cagey bastard. I wouldn't put anything past you."

"Fine. The wand stays. Shall we go now?"

"A cagey, impatient bastard," Tonks complained. "That's understandable. Let's go talk to Harry and Ron."

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Severus sat in a wing chair in front the fireplace in the teacher's lounge as Tonks interrogated Potter and Weasley. He gave an appearance of indifference, but was actually carefully considering every word the boys said.

"Did you think Miss Tilly was unusual in any way?" Tonks asked the boys.

"She had a mustache," Ron offered earnestly. "That's unusual, isn't it? I've never seen another girl with a mustache. You don't think that maybe she was a bloke, do you?"

Severus struggled to suppress a snort of laughter. It wasn't often that he found Weasley's idiocy amusing. Gallows humor, he supposed.

"She hung out in the Owlery a lot," said Harry, ignoring Ron's comment. "She talked to the birds. She acted like they all belonged to her. She made me feel nervous and uncomfortable, like there was something not quite right about her."

'Now we're getting somewhere,' Severus thought. *'Keep him talking, Tonks.'*

"What did she say to the birds, Harry?"

"I don't remember anything specifically. She would stop when she saw me," he answered.

"Did she say anything to you?"

"She would ask me who I was owling all the time. It made me uncomfortable to tell her that I was owling Katie, so I always told her that I was owling Remus. She wouldn't ask me questions about him."

Ron laughed. "Remember the time that Hedwig got confused and delivered your letter to Katie to Remus? The poor man probably thought you were in love with him. That was funny!"

"I didn't think so," Harry complained. "This is serious Ron. Will you stop joking around?"

"What did you say to her, Harry?" asked Tonks. "Miss Tilly, I mean. Not Katie."

"I just said hello... thanks for giving Hedwig treats... see you later. You know, polite stuff."

'Harry loves the way I take care of his owl... he said he'd meet me later. Of course, Severus thought. 'The girl was reading much too much into simple social exchanges.'

He was beginning to get the answers he needed.

"I don't see the big deal," Ron spat. "That weird girl tried to kill Hermione. Professor Snape did what he had to do to save her. They should be pinning the Order of Merlin on his chest as far as I'm concerned, not trying to put him in Azkaban."

Severus found himself wishing he could award house points to Gryffindor on Weasley's behalf. It was an uncomfortable feeling that he hoped would pass quickly.

"I tend to agree, Ron," Tonks said, patting him on the shoulder. "Understand, I have to do my job. You can go, boys." Tonks escorted the boys to the door and turned to address Severus. "Okay, back to your chambers, Sev. Sorry this wasn't more productive."

"On the contrary, Tonks. I thought it was very interesting."

Very interesting, indeed.