

All Yours

by selinabl

Sometimes it takes bravery to trust the heart

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Chapter 1 of 1

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A/N: Written for Romancing the Wizard's Challenge Nineteen: Bring Out Your Dead!

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Word count: Exactly 750

Prompt: 36 - after the storm

Additional challenge condition: incorporate an original magical device

Dark clouds had swallowed the warm evening sun, immersing the sky in coal-black as first drops of rain touched her skin; cool and calming, so unlike the hot tears that blinded her while she ran – fled from the storm within her. If she stopped, only for a moment, she would fall, would succumb to the overwhelming pain that flooded her chest, tightened her throat. He would never be hers. The memory flashed before her eyes like a ghost as she heard him calling after her.

Like every Saturday since the beginning of her apprenticeship with Professor Flitwick, she had spent the afternoon in the staff room, reading and drinking tea. She had known he would join her some time during the afternoon. Severus always did. Those hours were the most cherished time of her week, a time in which she could talk to him, could share her newest research while drowning in the warm, dark surge of his eyes. She had always known that it was hopeless to give her heart to somebody who had pledged his own to a love long lost. But her heart was a foolish thing.

She had still been alone in the staffroom when an owl had dropped a formal letter into her lap. Unbelievably, she had absorbed the content, informing her that she – or more precisely, her translation quill had won the international charms competition. A quill she had initially developed as a Christmas present for Severus, as she had realized how much time and effort translating his research for the Potions masters around the world cost him; a task the item performed for him now. Creating the different language charms had taken her weeks, but seeing the unconcealed delight in his eyes as she had explained her present had been worth every minute. She had never deemed her work flawless, but Severus had insisted that she submit her research to the competition. Without him, she never would have.

The moment he had stepped into the room, arching a questioning eyebrow at the giddy smile that welcomed him, she had pushed the letter into his hands, her heart nearly bursting with excitement and gratitude. And as he had looked up from the parchment again, a true smile gracing his mouth, she had been lost. Swiftly and without thinking, she had slid her arms around his neck, brushing her lips against his. Gently. Longingly. For heartbeats, nothing else had existed but the tingling sensation in her stomach.

But cold reality had assaulted her as soon as she had come to her senses. She had felt him stiffen under her touch – at her kiss, but seeing her arms enfolding nothing but

a rigid, motionless statue, a sphinx clad in black, had stabbed her heart. All the 'what ifs' she had so foolishly nursed had dissolved into thin air. Only his eyes, a dark, unfathomable abyss, had never strayed from hers, not even as she had backed away, fighting against the threatening tears.

She never saw him reach for her as she fled from the room.

"Hermione."

Her name echoed still through the rain as a demanding hand grasped her wrist, ending her flight. The sudden jerk caused her to tumble on the wet ground, falling backwards against his chest – and into his arms. Feeling his warmth, his closeness, was unbearable to her now. Frantic, she struggled against his embrace, her eyes lingering on the Apparition spot meters away.

"Damn, witch, have mercy on me and remain still for a moment."

"I want to leave."

"Well, so much is obvious."

"Let me go, Snape!"

"No."

A declaration, low, determined. And any possible reply died on her tongue as long, slightly trembling fingers grasped her chin, asking her in a silent gesture to meet his eyes; night-dark orbs, filled with affection and ardor, found her gaze. Awareness dawned, unfurling a warm, pleasant feeling in her chest.

"Not until you allow this coward to do what I should have done minutes – no, months ago."

The smile that touched her eyes was all the permission he needed. In one smooth movement, he leaned down, his hands cupping her face.

"There is little I can say in my defense for not trusting my heart earlier but please believe me, it's all yours – I am all yours, Hermione – if you want me."

And she knew he was as he claimed her lips in a slow, passionate kiss; a kiss intended to brush every doubt from her heart, bringing the calm after the storm.