

Remember, Remember

by Somigliana

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Chapter 1 of 1

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Hermione buries her nose into her scarf and shivers. The cold clutches greedily at the hem of her cloak, and Hogwarts closes its Great Doors protectively after her with a muffled thud. The smoky scent of wood fire and dancing flame lingers around her: in the scarf, her cloak, her hair. The grey morning wind is aflutter with specks of ash—remnants of effigies (of both Guy Fawkes and Voldemort) that roasted on the Hogsmeade bonfires last night.

Her eyes quickly scan the grounds—down to the gates, across to the lake-edge, the edge of the forest, the greenhouses— and the slotted windows behind her. She smiles, satisfied, and she races down the short flight of stairs, streamers of hair swirling in the wind. She steps off the last stair—never slowing her stride—onto a cushion of air and magic, and she speeds along the grounds towards the lake, barely suppressing a childish squeal of glee.

Her cheeks are red and numb when she stops abruptly at the white tomb. Her cloak, which had dervished wildly on the wind during her flight, falls to her toes abruptly. Here, where the dead are buried and remembered, the wind is respectful and calm—a mere whisper rustling in the leaves of the trees overhead.

She slides her wand up her sleeve and pulls a little beaded bag from her cloak pocket. It rattles slightly as she opens it, tinkles as she digs into its depths to retrieve a little plastic bag. She weighs it in her palm for a moment before placing it on top of the tomb. "Bonfire toffee," she murmurs, and her icy fingers curl into her palm as she remembers the man who loved sweets on any occasion.

"And what did you bring for me?" a smooth, amused voice asks from behind her.

A delighted smile graces her lips before she trains them into primness. She turns to face Severus Snape, who is sitting, bold as brass, on top of a large headstone.

"Isn't sitting on your own grave a little... disrespectful?" she asks, ignoring his question.

Severus shrugs casually. "Dancing on his grave—" He points a long, pale finger at Dumbledore's white tomb. "—might be construed as somewhat disrespectful. *This* is merely dramatic irony."

Hermione's eyes narrow suspiciously. "You haven't?" she says incredulously, pressing a palm to the marble. The cold slides up her skin and crawls into her bones.

Severus merely smirks and changes the subject, although his eyes do flicker towards Remus Lupin's grave momentarily. "You shouldn't fly casually like that," he chides. "That's not why I—"

"Nobody was watching; I checked first," she argues defensively. She crosses her arms over her chest, burying her numb hand beneath her armpit to thaw it a bit.

He slides off his stone perch and glides towards her gracefully. "People," he drawls down at her, standing so close that she can feel his presence acutely, down to her bones, "might call you the next Dark Lord if they saw."

"Oh, tosh!" she says, pursing her lips as she sniffs disapprovingly.

Severus chuckles. "If you're not careful, Hermione, you're going to turn into the next Minerva McGonagall..."

"That's not necessarily a bad thing."

He tilts his head, displaying an ugly, livid gash on his neck as he does so. "No," he says after a heartbeat. "I suppose it wouldn't be." He turns away from Hermione and places a winter pale hand on another gravestone.

"I miss her," Hermione says with a soft, shivering sigh. The cold lingers in a light mist before the wind hurries it away.

"It's cold," he says, as if he's just noticed. "Come... I'll make you tea, and we can reminisce by the fire like two old farts..."

Hermione's smile is blue-tinged. "You can't make tea," she says with a superior tilt of her chin, but she's already turning to walk in the direction of the Whomping Willow.

"Well, then," he says with a wistful sigh, "you can make tea for yourself, and I'll just pretend."

Hermione smiles, and the lines at the corners of her eyes dip into sharp creases. She rubs her liver-spotted hands together, wishing that Warming Charms could be applied to moving objects, or even witches.

"That sounds delightful, my friend," she says, and her hand stops just short of taking his. Although she longs to feel his fingers wrap around hers, she's learnt that icy lesson more than once.

They both glide across the ground—despite Severus' earlier admonishment—almost close enough to touch. In the grey November air, Hermione's cloak dances on the wind once more. Severus distorts the light just slightly, so that if you looked closely, you'd see that the elderly witch wasn't alone.