

I dream of...

by ancientgirl

Hermione gets caught by a Death Eater on her way into the castle, but which Death Eater has hold of her and what will he do?

Chapter 1

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I came across an old drawing of Marquise a couple of days ago and remembered that at the time I saw it I wanted to write a short fic for it. So I sat down and wrote this very short fic. I hope you enjoy this.

This story is not HBP-compliant. It takes place during Hermione's seventh year at Hogwarts.

All canon characters belong to JKR.

Thank you as always to June for her suggestions and help with the beta work here.

I dream of...

Hermione realized only too late that she had stayed in the forest longer than she should have. She walked as quickly and quietly as she could. She was already in a dangerous situation; the last thing she needed was to call attention to herself. As she reached the edge of the forest, the lights of Hogwarts were visible in the distance. She could see the burning torches around the perimeter of the school.

As she quickened her pace, all she could think of was getting into the school. In the last two months, Voldemort's attacks had grown more and more violent against those in the wizarding world not with him. Harry had gone into hiding with Headmaster Dumbledore. The head of her house, Professor McGonagall, was running the school and carrying messages from Dumbledore to the Order.

There was also another person as noticeably absent as Dumbledore, and that was Professor Snape. Since the summer after their fourth year, she had known he was spying for the Order. It was only this past summer, however, that she realized how much danger he constantly put himself in, trying to play both sides of the proverbial coin.

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Hermione had been returning home from the Burrow, where the Weasleys had given Harry a surprise seventeenth birthday party. Harry was no longer staying with the Dursleys by that time. He stayed at the Dursleys' home for only a week when Headmaster Dumbledore and Professor Snape collected him and took him to stay with the Weasley family. At first, Hermione was going to spend the night at the Burrow, but at the last minute decided to return home. It was that decision that almost cost her her life.

Her parents' home was not connected to the Floo network. The only way she could get home was to Apparate to the unlit road behind their house. Hermione barely made it out past the gate to the road when she was grabbed from behind. For three weeks, she was kept in a dark cold room that she surmised was a dungeon. She was beaten

daily, and raped twice by a man with conspicuous blond hair and cold gray eyes. She had tried to keep strong emotionally, but with no possible escape and no one to encourage her, she eventually lost hope. It was at the beginning of her fourth week when the door finally opened and light came into her dark room.

When she lifted her head and opened her bruised eyes, all she saw was a dark shadow approach her. Thinking that this was the end of her life, she closed her eyes and accepted her fate. But instead of death, she found life. She was easily lifted by strong arms that held her body tightly.

"I have you now, Miss Granger," said a deep strong voice. A voice she'd grown to hear in her mind as she recited potion ingredients ever since she'd first heard it six years ago. She trembled and allowed herself to relax. She knew that Professor Snape would keep her safe and take her home.

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She now felt her rapid heartbeat begin to calm. The steps leading to the Gryffindor Tower from the outside of the castle were just a few yards away. As she reached her destination, she felt strong arms grab her by the waist and a hand cover her mouth. Her worst fear had come true. Once again she had been caught. Once again she had taken her safety for granted. She closed her eyes and knew that this time, there would be no coming home. This would be the end for her.

Hermione struggled as the tears ran down her face. It was no use, though. Whoever had hold of her now held tightly. If anything, his arm around her waist became tighter and tighter. She felt herself being dragged towards the opening to the dungeons. As she and her captor moved into the building, she felt his grip loosen. She took a deep breath and turned around, and came face-to-face with a Death Eater mask.

She backed away from the Death Eater, hoping to get away from him, but found herself trapped in the corner of the stone wall. The man reached for his mask and began to take it off. She knew that this time Lucius Malfoy would not let her get away so easily.

"Miss Granger..." Severus took off the mask he had forgotten he was wearing. He inwardly berated himself. After all she had gone through before his rescue of her from Malfoy Manor, he should have realized she would be afraid. "Hermione, I'm sorry. I thought I saw a real Death Eater in the forest, and I wanted to get you inside quickly. I wasn't thinking..."

Hermione covered her face with her hands and cried. Severus reached his hand out to her but quickly pulled it back. No doubt she would not want to be touched by him, not now, most probably not ever. He backed away from her, giving her room to run away from him if she chose to do so. Instead of running past him, she ran straight to him. Her face buried against his chest as she clutched at his robes. Severus looked down at her, and slowly and carefully wrapped his arms around her small trembling body.

"I...I thought you were him," she sobbed.

Severus rubbed her back and kissed her forehead.

"It's all right," he said as his free hand cupped her cheek. "Lucius can't hurt you again."

"I see him...I see him in my dreams. Oh, Professor, I try to be brave, but I'm so scared he'll come for me again someday. I...I couldn't bear for him to touch me again."

Severus held her closer. He knew the dreams she'd been having. Since his rescue of her nine months ago, he occasionally tapped into her mind in the evenings. He knew she was still having nightmares of her ordeal at Lucius' hands. At times Severus even managed to slip some Dreamless Sleeping Draught into her pumpkin juice, but that didn't happen often. Often he wrestled with himself, wondering if he should interfere in her dreams and perhaps give her more enjoyable visions instead of the horrible reenactments of her ordeal. But he could not. He was still her teacher.

"Hermione, Lucius can never hurt you again." He looked into her glittering eyes and wiped her falling tears with the pad of his thumb.

"How can you be so sure? He despises me. He won't rest until I'm...until I'm dead," she said quietly.

Severus quirked his head.

"Didn't you know?" he asked.

"Know what?" she asked, wondering.

"Lucius is dead. I...killed him that night I found you."

Hermione gasped in shock. While she knew that Lucius had no redeeming qualities, she also knew that at one time the two men had been friends. How hard it must have been for Severus to kill a man he once thought of as a brother, from what she had once heard.

"It must have been difficult for you to do that. I know he was a friend of yours at one time. Could you not have placed him in a body bind? Perhaps allowed the Aurors to take him away and saved yourself the pain?"

Severus shook his head. "I would have suffered more had he hurt you again. And you are right; he would not have allowed you to live. I was not going to take that chance with you again."

She stepped away from him.

"Why would you suffer because of me?" She wondered if perhaps there was something more to his reasons for rescuing her than just merely saving the life of a student in his care or a future member of the Order.

"Maybe not today, nor tomorrow, but someday very soon this war will end. We will all be free to truly live again. Many of us for the first time, really." He pulled his robes around himself as though to keep the draft from his body, but instead to protect himself from rejection. As though the dark robes were his shield. He turned away from her and stared out towards the Hogwarts grounds. There was a fog building now, running across the grassy field.

"I dream, just as every one else does, Hermione. I dream of some day leaving this place and opening a small apothecary in Hogsmeade. I dream of..." He bowed his head down, knowing that after he said what was inside his heart she would either laugh or run. "I dream of loving, and being loved. Perhaps someday when you have been away from this place for a while, you will have forgotten me as your professor and instead think of me as a man that you would consider spending time with."

Hermione took a cautious step towards him. She knew that this was the moment in which she would either break him forever, or make him want to live beyond this war.

"I don't need to wait to be gone from Hogwarts to consider that. I think I would very much like spending time with you." She lightly placed her hand on his shoulder and she felt him touch it with his. His head turned and he kissed her hand, and she saw him smile.

"You should go to your room. It is quite late," he said in a stern yet playful tone.

"Then I will go. I wouldn't want to be given detention so close to graduation." She smiled and walked away.

"Miss...Hermione?" he called to her.

"Yes, Severus?" She said his name, hoping it would please him.

"Since tomorrow is Sunday, would you care to have breakfast with me out by the lake?" he asked hopefully.

"Yes, I would love to. Eight o'clock?" she asked.

"Eight o'clock," he agreed.

She smiled and turned, then ran up the steps leading to the upper hall of the school.

Severus walked to his rooms. He knew that by this time next week, the war would be in full swing. He also knew that Voldemort was growing weaker by the day, thanks to a potion he had slipped into his tea two nights ago. Potter would have no problem killing the Dark Lord. With Voldemort dead, most of the Death Eaters would run and ultimately be gathered up by Aurors.

Before the year was over, he would have his apothecary and his love.

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There it is. I told you it was short. I'm attaching Marquise beautiful drawings that inspired it.

