

Realization of a dream

by ancientgirl

Short sequel to "I dream of..." This is total fluff.

Chapter 1

Chapter 1 of 1

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As I said in the summary this is a short sequel to "I dream of..." and it is total fluff. I thought after the first story that it might be nice to add the "after."

I hope you enjoy this.

All canon characters belong to JKR.

Thank you again to June for doing the beta work for me and her help.

Realization of a dream

Severus finished arranging the new display at the front window. There were several new cauldrons that had arrived that morning, and ingredients that would be useful for some of the soon-to-be arriving seventh year Hogwarts students.

He had purchased the small apothecary five years prior. Since he became owner of the shop, however, it had grown from a one-room store, to a two-story Victorian building. The first floor was the primary shop in which he sold ingredients for potions, as well as the necessary tools for the making of said potions. There were two walls filled with books and monthly periodicals, ranging between spells for Transfiguration to Potions to even a bit of caring for magical beasts. There was also a room in the back of the storefront, which held shop supplies.

The upper part of the store was used as a sort of reading and research section. Students and sometimes scholars would come by and spend time looking through some of the books not sold to the general public. The section was also used once a month for the Order meetings, which were still held.

The cellar was host to a small private lab. Here Severus and his partner made potions that were also sold upstairs, and developed mail order potions upon special request.

It felt as though it had taken him a lifetime to realize his simple dream of owning his own business. With the end of the war against Voldemort, his dream finally came true in more ways than one. His partner roused him from his thoughts as he heard her coming up from the lab.

"Severus, I think I'm just about done with those new orders. I've got one more cauldron to finish before we can send them off." Hermione smiled as she rubbed her round belly.

Severus turned and crossed his arms.

"Hermione, I told you to leave those to me." He walked to her and placed his hands on her shoulders. "You know I don't want you making potions so close to your due date." He turned her around and gently pushed her towards the counter and a cushioned stool.

"I can't just sit around and do nothing. Besides, Poppy said there was no harm in my making some of the energy boosting potions. None of the ingredients are toxic." She allowed him to help her sit.

"Be that as it may, I don't want you tiring yourself. When our son is born he will need more of your time, so you may as well rest all you can now." Severus transfigured a stack of books into a chair, sat next to her, and placed his hand on her stomach. Hermione smiled and placed her hand on his.

"I'm so nervous. I've never cared for a baby before. I don't know the first thing about taking care of a child," she said shakily.

Severus chuckled; he had seen her memorizing all those books and interviewing every parent she met. "You will be fine. Technically we both know all we need to know. I think we have read every book ever produced, both Muggle and Wizard, on the subject of caring for babies. As for the rest, all we need to do is to love him. And we will have no problems there." He smiled at her and raised his hand to tuck several errant strands of hair behind her ear.

"I'm the one who should be nervous, though." His smile faded as he thought of his own childhood. While he knew that his mother loved him, his father was a different story. A man like that had no business bringing a child into this world, much less be involved in his upbringing.

Hermione knew what he was thinking, and took hold of his face with her soft warm hands.

"Let go of those demons, Severus. They do you more harm than good. You are nothing like him, and you will love our child and be the most wonderful father in the world." She kissed the tip of his nose and laughed. "Why, our son hasn't even been born yet, and you are already spoiling him."

"I fail to see how reading to him can be construed as spoiling," he said haughtily.

"No, not so much reading to him, but sending him images from the story books, Quidditch manuals, and potions spell books via Legilimency is spoiling him. I don't know what possessed me to suggest you could possibly begin communicating with him that way." She shook her head and tried her best to look angry, but her eyes betrayed her. Truth be told, she found it quite endearing that he would take such an interest in their child this early. She supposed his own childhood probably did have something to do with it. Hermione would never voice her current feelings to him, but in a way she was glad he had the childhood he did. It was that little boy who turned into the lonely teenager who would go through such hardship, only to turn into the man who sat next to her today.

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There was so much about him that he owed to the struggles in his life, just as there were for her. The war had taken a toll on both of them. She lost her innocence to events leading up to the war. Lucius Malfoy had taken her from the Weasleys' front yard. Those three weeks of captivity were a nightmare for her. Lucius hated her, and he took his rage out on her. She represented all the Muggles in the world he wanted to wipe out of existence. Much as he saw her as Mudblood filth, it didn't stop him from taking her body for his pleasure. Had it not been for Severus' rescue, who knows how many more indignities Lucius would have made her suffer through before eventually killing her?

The rest of that summer before her seventh year consisted of planning on the part of the Order. Before the end of that winter, the Dark Lord was defeated and gone. All that was left of him was a nightmare of a memory. Death Eaters were being rounded up by the thousands and those that were caught were given the Dementor's Kiss. The few there were left were being hunted down by patient Aurors and brought to justice.

It was during the Hogwarts end-of-war celebration, which had been held back to coincide with the graduation of that year's students, when Severus approached Hermione with a proposition.

He informed her that he had purchased a small apothecary shop and wished for her to join him in his new adventure. While she smiled, she herself informed him that she wished to study and become a Potions Mistress in her own right. As he nodded his understanding, he stoically began to turn away, only to be caught by the arm and pulled back by her.

"It is my understanding, however, that my last two years of study are to be an internship program under a Potions Master. I would very much like to be under you." She smiled, hoping he would understand the double meaning.

He immediately closed the distance between their bodies and kissed her.

"I can assure you, Hermione, you will most certainly enjoy being under me."

Hermione spent the following two weeks with him, helping him set up what would ultimately be their dream together, before she began her university studies.

After she had successfully completed two years of study, Severus officially offered her an internship. While they lived together, it was decided mutually that they would wait until she received her full accreditation before they married. It was necessary for her to leave him for one month while she took her final exams. The exams for Potions were among the most difficult to pass. It was basically one long 20-day test. The students took the exams in small groups, each group assigned to a room together with a Potions Master, who would give them two potions to make each day. There was never any time to prepare yourself, because it was never known which potion you would be asked to make, and no one had the same Potions Master two days in a row. It was hard, but Hermione was happy it was done this way. It was common knowledge after two years of internship with Severus that they were lovers. By taking her exams this way, everyone would know that she earned her degree and title on her own strength.

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She took her last exam over a year ago and did indeed receive her full accreditation. Since then, they married and moved into a small estate just outside Hogsmeade. They decided they didn't want to wait to start a family, and Hermione soon found herself pregnant, much to the delight of her new husband.

And so, this was their life. Hermione gave birth to a healthy boy they named Balthazar. He had his father's dark eyes and Cupid's bow lips, and his mother's small nose and unruly hair. In the years to come they would have two more children, one more son, Mordecai, and a daughter, Lizbet. Being raised in a potions laboratory, they learned at a young age how to make simple potions.

Their children would attend Hogwarts, along with more Potters and Weasleys and even a Malfoy, who was nothing, like his grandfather. Balthazar and Mordecai were sorted into Gryffindor, while Lizbet, who was the apple of her father's eyes, became quite the cunning Slytherin.

Severus and Hermione opened two more shops, one in Diagon Alley and another just outside of France. In their travels, they took in as much of the world as they could, taking all the joy that life gave them, for if any two people deserved joy, it was them.

The dream was realized, and their nightmares ... of Death Eaters, war, kidnapping, and rape ... were eventually forgotten.