

An Empty Bed

by BrenaMarie

Severus wakes up to an empty bed... Where could his wife be?

One-Shot

Chapter 1 of 1

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Disclaimer: They belong to JKR; that's why she's got all the money.

It was almost three in the morning when Severus Snape woke to an empty bed. He looked towards the loo and realized that the light was off and that the door was still open.

Where is she?

"Hermione," he called out, thinking that she might just be in the kitchen getting a drink, but heard no response.

Severus continued to wait as the minutes passed, and his wife was still missing. He waited until three-thirty before getting up to search for her. He grabbed his robe, slipped his wand up his sleeve, and stuffed his feet in his slippers. He then walked out into their quarters, but didn't see any trace of her.

As he spun around trying to determine where he should look next, he noticed that there was light coming from underneath the door to their private lab.

What the hell is she doing? It's three-thirty in the morning! She should know better than to try and brew anything when she hasn't had a reasonable amount of sleep.

Severus stormed into the lab on a mission to chastise his wife.

"Hermione! What..."

He couldn't even complete a sentence, let alone a tirade after getting a good look at his wife.

There she stood behind a cauldron, ingredients everywhere, staring at him with tears streaming down her face.

"Did I wake you?" she asked quietly while sniffing.

"Your empty side of the bed woke me. What are you doing?"

"I... I... can't sleep."

Severus walked over to his wife and turned her to face him. He then wrapped his arms around her and held her tightly to his chest. As soon as she rested her head against him, she began to cry in earnest once more.

"The nightmares... they just don't stop. They get worse and worse and I just... I know you have to get up early... I didn't want to wake you with my crying, so I thought... I thought if I could brew some Dreamless Sleep we both could get the rest we need..."

"Shhhh, Hermione, you need to calm down," Severus said as he stroked her hair.

"They're so vivid; it's like watching a horror movie. I just can't stop them, and I don't realize they're only nightmares; I feel like I'm there." Hermione continued to try to explain her strange behavior to her husband. "I know this never happens to you, and that you don't understand. You know... you know that they're dreams and you just play along to see where it goes... I'm constantly dreaming that you're dead, or dying in some gruesome way and... and there's nothing left... I just want them to stop! Please, Severus, make them stop!"

"Hermione, you know that Dreamless Sleep is addictive. You really need to get it from a Healer and let them moderate it if you feel as though you need it that bad."

"I need it! I need to sleep! I can't keep living like this... every night... I'm just so scared..."

"Hermione, maybe if you would just tell me what you're so afraid of, I could help. There's a possibility that if you would talk to me and address the problem, that the nightmares would stop."

Severus felt her shaking her head against his chest.

"Hermione, please, just talk to me. You don't necessarily need to resort to a potion to help you sleep."

"Severus, I know... I know you'll think it's crazy... and I told you that it didn't matter... now suddenly it does."

"What matters?"

"I'm... I'm afraid you're going to die... and there will be nothing left."

"Hermione, what are you talking about?"

"I love you. I love you so much, and we have this wonderful life together. You're my partner, my friend... you and I... and if you die, I'll have nothing left of you..."

Severus couldn't think of a single thing to say in that moment as he processed what his wife was really trying to tell him. He stood there clutching her as he considered all of the repercussions of what he was about to say, and realized that it didn't matter. All the fear and doubt that he'd been carrying around over the same subject for years slipped away from him now that he knew how much his wife needed this... and he needed it too.

"I don't think you're crazy, and you're right, you said it didn't matter. But, Hermione, you said that five years ago, and I understand that you're allowed to change your mind."

"I'm sorry... I didn't want to bring it up like this..."

"It's okay, Hermione. I'll make sure you can get some sleep tonight."

Severus stepped away from his wife and removed his wand from the sleeve of his robe and proceeded to cancel her contraception charm.

"Severus... are you sure? I don't want you to think I'm forcing you... I mean, I don't... I just want you to want this as much as I do and not because you feel bad for me. Honestly, I can just take the Dreamless Sleep..."

Severus wrapped his arms around his wife once more. Then, before she could start rambling again he bent over, placing one arm behind her knees, and lifted her into his arms.

"I told you that you were going to get some sleep tonight, and you know I mean what I say. I just never told you exactly when..."

A/N: This is in response to *saraladydalian's* prompt of: "Severus catches Hermione brewing an unprescribed potion."

Much love to *astopperindeath* for the awesome beta work. You're wonderful, honey, thank you so much for offering. *Glomps*