

Promise Me

by debjunk

Severus walks blindly along a Paris street. Why can't he see the beauty around him?

Oneshot

Chapter 1 of 1

Severus walks blindly along a Paris street. Why can't he see the beauty around him?

Severus stalked through the streets of Paris feeling like King Louis XVI heading to the gallows. His shoulders were slumped and his usual swift gait was slowed. Even his head was bowed low. The smell of a patisserie brought his head up as he sniffed the pastries that were displayed on the outside of the shop. He eyed some napoleons, his mouth watering at the layers of custard and pastry topped with confectioner's sugar.

Sweets... you do not deserve sweets...

He walked on, pointing his nose to the sidewalk. His shoulders seemed to slump even more. He barely dragged himself along. Soon the street he was meandering along led to a park. He glanced up at it, barely seeing the beautiful trees blooming with tiny pink and white flowers. The smell got to him, though. It was almost as heavenly as the sweet shop he'd passed.

Beauty is not what you deserve either.

He spied a bench deep within the park and made his way to it. Throwing himself down, he gazed around him. He frowned in misery. Everywhere he looked, lovers walked. A young couple walked arm in arm right in front of him, staring into each other's eyes. They didn't even glance at him as they passed; they were too enraptured with each other. Severus felt a stab at his heart as he saw the happy couple move by.

Several couples were strewn about the grass in different positions. Severus scowled as several kissed one another all at the same time. Why was it that everywhere he went life mocked him? He thought of her... She'd been in his arms only a few short hours ago. They'd been like these lovers, arm in arm, kissing one another affectionately. Now, though, he was alone, and it was nothing more than he deserved.

His mind raced over the fight that had resulted in him feeling melancholy on this bench. She'd talked of love, and he'd pushed her away as quickly as possible, knowing that he would be poison to her. She needed someone younger... better.

"Severus, I said I love you," Hermione said once again.

Severus looked down his nose at her. "You speak of love, yet what do you know of it? Don't lie to me, Hermione. I know this is just some experiment of yours. I've just been playing along."

Her eyes filled with tears. "No, Severus... no..."

He pushed her away. "Do not try to fill my head with your silly fantasies, girl."

"I thought..." she gasped, trying to control herself. "I thought you felt the same."

He came close to her and sneered. "You have been a lovely diversion, Hermione, but I'm sorry, the fun is now over. I do not fall in love... with anyone."

She'd run out of the room then, slamming the door behind her. He'd wanted to run after her and pull her to him—tell her it was all a mistake, and he was a fool—but this was the way it needed to be. She deserved better. She deserved much better than him.

He put his head into his hands, blocking out the sight before him—a sight of happiness and love. He wouldn't have that ever again. He'd ensured that with his cruel treatment of the one he himself loved. But he needed to do it. He needed her to live a happy life. He knew that no matter what she felt now, she'd realize just what he was eventually, and then she'd not want to have anything to do with him.

He felt someone settle next to him, but he didn't bother to look up at the encroacher.

"For a spy, you're really easy to follow," Hermione said to him softly.

Severus' head snapped up, and he looked at her with wide eyes.

"After I ran out, it took me about five minutes to figure out what you were doing."

"And just *what* was I doing?" he asked in a gravelly voice.

She arched an eyebrow at him, mocking his own signature move. "You, Severus Snape, were trying to drive me away. You..." She turned to face him. "You think that you're not good enough for me, right? You think that I can do better; that I don't know you and the horrible things you've done." Her arm came around him, and she pulled him close. He wanted to pull away from her, but he didn't have the strength after the mental torture he'd been putting himself through.

"Severus, you couldn't be farther from the truth. I know what you've done, I understand that."

"No... you could never..."

"You were a Death Eater, Severus. I understand what that means."

"I am not a good man."

She pulled his face up then and made him look into her eyes.

"You are, though. I know you're not perfect. I know that. You're a right bastard much of the time." Her eyes filled with tears. "But you're my bastard, and I wouldn't have you any other way."

"You... you should find someone who will treasure you."

She stiffened slightly. "I was hoping that person would be you."

"Hermione... I..."

"Severus, do you love me?"

"It doesn't matter how I feel, you deserve someone better."

"Severus... Do you love me?"

His eyes searched hers. He found her feelings reflected in them. The woman was so transparent he would be able to know exactly what she was thinking even if she was miles away. He loved that about her. If he were honest with himself, he loved everything about her.

She arched her eyebrow once again.

He couldn't stop his words then; they just tumbled from him without thought of what the repercussions might be. "Merlin, yes, I do."

Her smile lit up the entire park. It was so glorious he almost needed to shield his eyes. He reveled in her. All he wanted to do was to pull her to him and envelop her within his arms, never letting her leave from his side.

"Then I don't see any problems, do you?" she asked coyly.

"You deserve better," he ground out.

She took his head in her hand. "I deserve better?" she asked incredulously. "I deserve better than a man who showers me with affection despite how much he snarls at the world? I deserve better than to have my heart's desire in you? Why would you say such a thing, Severus?"

"You are the best thing I've ever know. You deserve the best. I am not that."

She smiled widely. "Then you do treasure me, don't you?"

"We shouldn't go there..."

"What are you afraid of?" she asked petulantly.

Losing you

"I don't know what you mean."

It was as if she could read his mind. Maybe after all this time she could. Maybe he wanted her to, to assure him that he was wrong, so very wrong about his fears.

"I am not leaving you. I will never leave you. I love you, and I know you love me. I'm not going to throw that away. You can fight against me all you want, but I will not let you convince yourself that you're not good enough for me. You want me to be happy, right?"

He nodded and winced at the same time.

"Do you not realize that I will only be happy with you?"

"You..."

She put her finger over his lips. "No arguing. I love you. I love you. I love you."

"Hermione..." He gave in then. He wouldn't deny her folly anymore. Why should he let himself suffer if she was going to delude herself that he was the right man for her. Why would he tempt fate and throw that away.

"My treasure," he murmured as he pulled her into a kiss. She was heaven. She was his. He would never be foolish again and try to drive her away. He was carried away by the witch in his arms. He broke their kiss and pulled her to him, burying her head in his chest.

"I love you, Hermione. If you want me, then I am yours, but I will never let you go if you agree to be with me."

She lifted her head and stared into his eyes. "Do you promise?"

He said only two little words before enveloping her again and kissing her senseless. "I promise."

A/N: Combined two prompts into one tonight:

Janus: Severus in Paris.

Bonus points for mentioning people from the French Revolution. Hooray!

kyriaofdelphi: Paris: trees in bloom, the smell of the patisseries, the parks filled with lovers