

Had She or Had She Not?

by *windwings*

My take on the Secret Wish Challenge for GrangerSnape100 LJ community.

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Chapter 1 of 1

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He rarely came to Hogwarts. The last time had been years ago, maybe a decade. He came to *see* her even less often.

At first, there simply had been no need. When the need had arisen, he couldn't bring himself to go, for the fear of running into those who visited her with devotion, almost religiously.

When the need ravished his mind with unbearable *tours de force*, he went. He still came to her only when the world around was sorrowful and soggy with November rain.

The girl who had jumped before an Unforgivable to save his life.

~oOo~

Her face had long before fallen out of his memory. He knew she'd had brown eyes and a thicket of curly hair, but if he tried to reconstruct her image before his mind's eye, all that came was a vague shape.

At one time, it had been essential for him to know why. Had she done it for him? Or would she, an epitomized Gryffindor, have done it for anyone? He'd thought that if he'd known that someone had found him worthy of sacrificing their life, perhaps, it'd mean atonement.

Sometimes, it was the only tether that held him to this life.

~oOo~

He had sifted every single one of their encounters for clues and found none. Their interaction had been sterile. If she'd had any feelings for him, she'd never acted upon them. He'd gone to Hogwarts and found a yellowed stack of her essays and parsed them for any shading of a meaning. Nothing but resourceful proficiency. He'd searched further.

Analyzing and overanalyzing, he'd been so immersed that it took him years to realize that, once again, he was going on for a remote beacon of a dead woman. A girl, really, but what difference did that make?

~oOo~

Her grave looked neglected, the path barely visible, the stone chipped and mossy. Small wonder, her friends had had her for seven years and had lived without her for almost seventy. Severus knelt, no graceful ease in his movements anymore, and cleared the stone of moss and ivy. He owed her that, at least. After all, he'd lived a decent life; he'd achieved goals and fulfilled wishes. His own, too. Except for that secret one. To know, had she or had she not? Not that it mattered, really. He still had her, in a

sense. He'd lived long enough to learn to just be thankful.