

Something Borrowed

by DawnEB

After an accident, what has happened to Hermione Granger, and just why does Harry need to call on Snape for help?

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Chapter 1 of 1

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AN: The prompt from dominiondreams: *"SS/HG Hermione is Lily's soul reborn. I know the time lines don't quite match up, but see what you can do..."*

Cringe I'm not keen on Lily, or the way that Snape obsesses with her both before and after her death. As hinted at, Hermione was already over two years old when Lily died, so the idea also smacks more of possession than reincarnation. However, it got me thinking, and this is the result, although I did deviate from the spirit of the prompt a little.

Hints of HG/RW, HG/SS, and SS/LP (sort of), but otherwise it's all rather general. Give it a go, you might be surprised.

"Ron, I think she's coming round."

"I'll get a Healer!"

The woman lying in the hospital bed winced as she tried to move her head, then slowly opened her eyes to look around. Disorientated, she waited as the blurry outline of the person beside the bed became clear, then sighed in relief.

"James! Oh, I had the most awful dream..." she paused, confusion once again taking hold before she continued. "You're not James, I mean, you look a bit like him, but you're not him. Are you a cousin or something? Where is James? And the baby?" Her voice was rising as a hint of panic edged into her questions.

Just then the door burst open and a redheaded man came blustering in, dragging a woman in Healer's robes behind him. Seeing the patient actually was awake, she hurried to the bedside and performed a series of diagnostic spells over her. "There, everything looks fine now. How do you feel, Miss Granger?"

"Who?"

The Healer frowned slightly and made a note on a sheaf of parchment she pulled from the end of the bed. "Hm. You might feel a little disorientated for a while, possibly have a touch of amnesia - don't worry, I'm sure it will prove to be temporary. Quite common after a blow to the head like that. Now, let's see. Do you remember your name?" The Healer smiled reassuringly.

"Of course I do. My name is Lily Potter."

After a moment of stunned silence, all hell broke loose in the room.

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"I'm sorry about Ron, but this has been a particular shock to him. One minute he's celebrating his engagement to Hermione at the Burrow, the next we're at the hospital and she's claiming to be his best friend's dead mother," Harry said from his position by the window of the private room. "Still, there was no need for him to start shouting like that. Hermione isn't the sort of girl to pretend about this just to get back at him. Is she?" He gave her a penetrating look.

"I don't know, JaHarry," she stumbled over the name. "Even if he did apparently hit her with a Quaffle during an impromptu game of broomless Quidditch during the celebrations."

Harry snorted gently. "Yeah, his mum was beside herself when 'her boys' started the chuck-around, and the look on your face..." he trailed off, uncertainly.

She smiled ruefully. "You still don't believe me, do you? About who I am?"

He considered her for a moment. "I'd like to believe you're my mum, but you'll forgive me if I'm sceptical. After all, you *are* possessing the body of one of my best friends, and it wouldn't be the first time someone had tried to trick me with something like that."

"What can I say to convince you?"

"Nothing. I mean, I never really knew you. Everything I know now has come to me from other people, so it is possible for someone else to have found out things in the same way, and I'd not know any better."

"True. Perhaps you could find someone who knew me... before, someone who could ask me something only they would know?"

Harry laughed mirthlessly "There's only Aunt Petunia left, and she wouldn't help. She still hates anything 'unnatural', as she calls magic."

An awkward silence fell between them, then a thought struck her. "What of Severus Snape?"

Harry's head shot up. "Snape? I... I don't know if he would... if that's even a good idea," he stammered.

"Oh, Harry, do you hate him that much?"

"No! I've tried to make my peace with him over the last few years, but, I dunno, he is still so bitter and cut off, almost lost, these days. It's just I know how much you my mum meant to him, and I don't want to make things more difficult."

"Sounds like I *need* to speak to him."

Harry looked at her for a moment as he considered this, then nodded sharply and left the room.

She sat reading the magazine Ginny Weasley had left behind when the door was opened forcefully, and a stony-faced figure billowed into the room, his ire radiating from him in waves. He glared at her, his eyes narrowing. "Thank you, Potter. Now leave us alone to get to the bottom of this nonsense," he said over his shoulder as he closed the door firmly behind him.

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The senior Healer took off his glasses and rubbed his eyes rather than look directly at either of the young men across the desk from him. "I've called you both in as the closest *magical* people to Miss Granger. Thanks to the assistance of Mr Snape, we are now of the opinion that Hermione is in a kind of coma, her mind unconscious though her body is, to all intents and purposes, fit and healthy. We will need to investigate just why that should be, but there is the complication of the, well, for want of a better word, the *possession* to be considered." He paused as Ron Weasley started to rise and protest, but his friend calmed him and urged the healer to continue.

"Yes, well, Mr Snape has confirmed that the *persona* presenting itself as Lily Potter has access to knowledge that he feels would have only been known to your mother," he nodded at Harry, "and he has agreed to continue working with us and, um, *Lily*, in order to get to the bottom of the matter - if at all possible." Having broken the news, he signaled his secretary for a pot of tea as the two men started clamouring at him and each other, and reached in his pocket for a Calming Draught.

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"It's nice to be out in the grounds. Much as I've enjoyed my bedside chats with you and Harry, I could do with a change of scenery." 'Lily' sat on the edge of the blanket she had laid out on the grass under the tree and looked up at Severus. "Oh, for goodness sake, do unbend a little and sit with me like you used to," she said as she patted the blanket beside her. She watched the muscle in the side of his jaw work for a moment before he suddenly folded in on himself and sat stiffly, with his elbows on his slightly spread and drawn up knees, his hands clasped between them.

"It is difficult for me to do things like 'we' used to when I am in the *physical* presence of Hermione Granger, not to mention..." His sentence drifted off, and the tension of his jaw returned.

"Not to mention?" She prompted, filling in for herself when he remained silent. "Not to mention the fact that you are still not fully convinced I'm who I claim to be."

His head dropped forward a little so his hair hid his face.

"Ha! Don't you hide behind your hair like that, Severus Snape. I've warned you before, I'll jinx your hair into bunches at the side of your head if you do that to me - and you *know* I'm not joking," she finished with a touch of mock menace in her voice.

Severus fell back and let out a sharp bark of a laugh. "Oh, yes, I remember all too well. Ah, Lily, you always were an inventive little witch," he concluded with a slightly wistful smile as he turned to her and propped his head on one arm.

"Why? Why are you here, Lily? Potter your son told me what happened at the final battle, how you appeared to him, so what's dragged you back to the mortal plane, hitchhiking in someone else's body?"

'Lily' looked away from his sharp gaze and played with a blade of grass, slowly shredding it. "I'm not sure, but I'm beginning to think that there was an opportunity to... put things right or something, and here I am. It's all hazy, but I can remember that, despite everything, I could never really disconnect from things here on the 'mortal plane', as you call it, to find peace. I thought it was Harry, the ongoing danger to my son from Voldemort, but it was still there even after *he* was finally gone."

Severus reached out and covered her hand with his. "Do you think, possibly, that it is meant to be a second chance? For us, I mean."

She looked down at his hand, then raised her eyes to his, a look of growing horror on her face. "Severus, there never was an *us*, not like that. Apart from the fact that I could never be happy stealing this girl's life and potential, I made my choice, and that choice was James! It is way past time you came to terms with that. Just what is wrong with you?"

Severus snatched his hand back and sat up, his back to her as he spat out bitterly, "I found you, I told you what you were, I was your friend long before Hogwarts, and you just up and *abandoned* me. It wasn't just being sorted into rival houses you were eager enough to hang around with me to study, weren't you? you just blithely moved on

and left me behind ."

She looked at him, dumbstruck. "I didn't abandon you, we just moved apart, *both* of us," she said eventually. At his snort she became defensive. "I'm sorry, Severus, but whatever fairy tale you had in your head, there wasn't going to be any Happily Ever After for us. You were a good friend to me for a while, but after a few years I just didn't understand you any more. Maybe I could have tried harder, but I was just a girl, Severus, and I was coming to terms with a whole new world. One that wasn't entirely how you had lead me to believe, either."

"And taking up with Potter? The person, together with Sirius Black, who had caused me more grief than anyone else in our time at school. Did you do it just to hurt me?" he spat.

"Oh, get over yourself! Not everything in my life revolved around you, it never did. James could be a prat, a strutting little pure-blood whose parents doted on him, but he had a lot of good qualities, too. Once you got past the bluster and bravado, there was a caring man with loyalty and values. That's who I learned to love, and I'd like to think that my influence helped to dispel the thoughtlessness that was behind the bullying. The man I married *wasn't* the same boy who hounded you through school. Believe it or not, he did come to regret most of that."

"Oh, I'm sure that's what he wanted you to believe," Severus sneered. After a full minute of silence he turned to look at her. His anger melted away as he saw the expression on her borrowed face, the silent tears forming tracks down the cheeks and a look of such sorrow in her eyes. Suddenly he threw himself at her, his arms wrapping around her waist as he buried his head in her lap and great sobs shuddered through him. "I'm sorry, Lily, so very sorry," he kept repeating while she held him, stroking his hair.

"Shh, Severus, it's all right. I forgive you, for everything," she said soothingly, knowing he meant more than for his latest outburst. She held him until he fell asleep, exhausted, in the dappled shade of the late afternoon.

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'Enjoy the show?'

'I'm sorry, but it's not as if I have much of a choice, is it? Being a prisoner in my own head, and all.'

'No, I suppose not. And think of it more as being a passenger than a prisoner. I don't suppose I need to tell you that Severus is a very... private... man. What he and I just shared...'

'Don't worry, I won't say or do anything to discomfort him. If anyone deserves another chance, a wiping of the slate, it's him.'

'Thank you. He's a very proud man, misplaced or not. Sometimes, that's all he's had.'

'So I gather.'

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'Well then, Hermione, you're waking up.'

'Yes. I mean, I've been aware of what's been going on all along, but like it was some kind of waking dream I couldn't influence. Now, well, as you can see...'

'Then perhaps this is what I was called here for, to give Severus some real closure, catharsis. Ready to take over the reins again?'

'I... I'm not sure. It still doesn't feel right, somehow. Perhaps it's not yet finished.'

'Hmm.'

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'So, you and the Weasley boy.'

'Oh, um, yes, me and Ron. Look, I'm sorry he's been a bit of a ...'

'Oh, don't apologise. I mean, it must be a bit of a strain, having your fiancée hospitalised then, when she wakes up, finding someone else has taken up residence. Someone who prefers to spend time with both your best friend and the bane of your school days rather than you.'

'I suppose so, when you put it like that. I think he still has a few trust issues about me and Harry... you know, the whole fugitive thing a few years back?'

'Yes, I know. I believe you have a few issues of your own from that time, too.'

'Perhaps. Wait, how do you know that? Omigod, have you been reading my mind?'

'Don't panic. I can't read your mind, although I share it. It's more a feeling or impression that leaks through from time to time.'

'Hm.'

'So, you and Weasley?'

'Ye-e-es. Do you have some kind of problem with that?'

'No.'

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'Do you?'

'What is that supposed to mean?'

'Nothing. It's just that whenever I mention the two of you, your 'feelings' become... confused?'

'I don't think you'd understand.'

'No? Try me.'

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'Okay, don't. But when everyone was trying to 'bring Hermione back' just after the accident, Ron spent a lot of time talking about his plans for your lives together. The thing is, those plans didn't sound like they were for the girl everyone else was talking about. A cosy little home to manage, kids round your ankles and a meal on the table for hubby when he got home from work. Not that I'm knocking it, but...'

'But?'

'But he was describing a future with some generic homemaker, not with you, Hermione.'

'I... Oh, what do you know? You showed promise at school, but left, got married and started a family in quick succession. You can't understand.'

'Can't I? Look, James was born late in his parents' lives, an unexpected blessing with no siblings. As a result, when we married we decided together that we would start a family early. But that didn't mean that I was going to be stuck at home raising the kids. On the contrary. James was independently wealthy. He worked to suit himself and planned on taking an active part in raising our children alongside me. A few years down the line when our two or three children were spending some time in school, I was to find something suitable to occupy myself. Further education, a career, research, society patron, even shopping, there were many choices open to me.'

'If I marry Ron, there won't be those options for me.'

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'I mean, I love him and all, in my own way. The sex is fun, too. It's comfortable with him. I can't help feeling something is missing, though.'

'Perhaps it is.'

'Hm.'

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'Prof...mist... Severus looks more peaceful, now.'

'Severus?'

'I don't really know how to address him anymore and, as you are familiar with him, I don't see the harm, here in my head. Besides, we have been corresponding with each other quite amicably over the past eighteen months or so.'

'Really?'

'Yes. He has a few rare editions I needed to reference for some research I was interested in following, and he was good enough to allow me to borrow them. There are a couple of volumes that he won't trust to the post, but he has indicated he might be willing to let me read through them at his home, should I not be able to borrow them from some other source.'

'Severus allows you to borrow his books? He must think highly of you.'

'It was probably just to stop me harassing him.'

'Or perhaps he appreciates your interest... In scholarly pursuits, I mean.'

'He seems to be sleeping more peacefully now. The frown has eased, at least.'

'I'm feeling a little tired myself, truth be told. Perhaps we should just lie back for a while, and not disturb him.'

'Mhm.'

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"Lily?'

"I think she's gone, Sev... I mean, Mister Snape."

They both sat up, a little stiff from sleeping on the ground, and shared a look of understanding before Severus stood and offered her his hand. "Then we must go and break the news of your recovery, Miss Granger," he said as he helped her to her feet.

"It's Hermione," she said, holding his hand a little longer than necessary.

"In that case, it's Severus," he replied, offering her his arm as he escorted her inside.

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