

A Rose for Hermione

by *Southern_Witch_69*

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Only Chapter

Chapter 1 of 1

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Disclaimer: J.K.R. created these characters. I've swiped them for a bit, but I'll Scourgify them and send them back later.

I'd like to thank my dear beta, Charmed Nay, who always puts up with my addiction to writing and edits my fanfiction and original work. Cheers, my doll. Thanks also go to CocoaChristy, who reads all of my stuff, listens to my ponderings, and points out any oddities she sees.

"Are you certain?" Harry asked, leaning forward. It had been fifty long years. He'd long before given up hope on ever finding...

"I am, Minister," Percy said, pushing his horn-rimmed glasses back against his face and thrusting his chest out self-importantly. "And it's completely by chance that I found it, but I don't need to point out that it may have never been found if I hadn't happened upon it."

Refraining from smirking at the pretentious man, Harry asked, "Will you show me? Just me. I don't want anyone else to know just yet...especially not Ron."

"Certainly. Certainly." Percy walked towards the door, a new spring to his step. "If you'll follow me to the Apparition chamber, I will Side-Along you to the exact location."

Harry followed the man and wondered what they might find. Percy said he'd been out surveying a discreet location for a place that they might possibly use for an upcoming Gobstones championship when he'd tripped and then had fallen back, landing halfway inside of a Disillusioned tent. He'd quickly had a look around and found that it was partially a tent and partially a cave. Upon further inspection, he'd realized that it was someone's home, someone's haven. He'd just realized that it was Hermione's place when a Dementor had glided towards him. He'd decided to flee and seek out Harry immediately.

"Here we are," Percy said, maneuvering himself to stand next to Harry and grasp his arm. They quickly Disapparated with a loud *Crack!*

The warm, salty breeze fresh off the coast hit him immediately, and he wondered why he'd never searched this place for her. *Of course she would have come here,* he thought bitterly. It was one of the places they'd gone to in order to find a Horcrux. Hermione had fallen in love with the island and thought it a paradise. It was also the unfortunate place where they'd encountered Severus Snape. The three of them had worked together to capture him, and they'd taken turns keeping watch over him during the next few months while using the information he so readily gave to help them with the remaining Horcruxes. After meeting and defeating Voldemort months later, Harry had decided that it was time to turn the traitor in to the Ministry.

Hermione and Ron had both objected, Hermione more vocally. It drove a wedge into their friendship. Ron had sided with Hermione, saying that they should at least 'give the git a chance to get away' since he'd been so helpful and knew how to play 'an excellent game of chess.' It had taken hours of pointing out that Snape, though a competent chess player and a reluctant helper, was still a murderer. Dumbledore's murderer.

He'd been disappointed to realize that Hermione no longer cared about that and had bought into the rubbish about him assisting Dumbledore in his passing, as he'd been about to die anyway, and they'd had a plan on how to go about things should Draco complete his duty or should he have to complete it for him. Harry demanded proof, but Snape had none. So he brought the man to the Ministry. After a brief trial, the Wizengamot found him guilty, of course, and sentenced him to life in Azkaban, generously waiving an execution for his help. Someone, however, didn't agree and had arranged for a Dementor to find its way into his cell; it had greedily sucked out his soul.

This had brought a halt to Hermione's attempts at gathering proof and information for an appeal. She'd changed drastically and even had the nerve to accuse Harry of sending the Dementor. A week later, Snape's soulless body along with the Dementor who'd taken his soul both vanished from Azkaban. The worst of it for Harry? Hermione was gone, too. He and Ron had searched for her for years and never found a trace.

"I don't understand," Percy said, looking around. "It was around here. Perhaps we ought to go further down."

Harry pulled his wand out and flicked it. *Show me.* A pale jet of light shot out of his wand and quickly highlighted the invisible tent. He nodded. "She's put a spell on it so that nobody would go near it, choosing instead to venture away. It's probably why you only found it by accident."

Finding the flap that Percy had fallen through, they entered, wands raised in case the Dementor was still about. That she'd have it with her still after all these years...fifty to be exact...was amazing.

"Look," Percy said, nodding towards the picture on the desk. It was of Hermione, Ron, and Harry, taken in their early twenties, right before Voldemort's demise.

They all looked so young and hopeful. Hermione was glowing with happiness, waving out at him. He had to stop himself from waving back, the smile fading from his face.

"And the Dementor came out of that great crevice in the rock...a cave!" Percy said, pointing to their left, fear in his voice.

After flicking his wand, Harry said, "She's got it spelled so that it can't get out. Come on." Ever so slowly they moved forward to the cave's entrance, not taking time to truly look over the things in the tented room. *Lumos.*

The air around them grew cold, their breath visibly wafting out before them. "Shite," Percy said, looking around with wide eyes. "No..."

Harry heard Hermione's voice in his head as a deep feeling of woe swept through him. *You did this, didn't you? How could you? I hate you! He'll die! You've killed an innocent man!*

Shaking his head, he realized it was the Dementor's doing. It was causing him to dwell on sad happenings. In the next instant, Percy squealed, attempting a Patronus on the dark, billowy form hovering above him, its rotting mouth open with rattling, putrid breath settling on Percy's face as it tried to get closer to suck at his soul.

Remembering the birth of his son, Harry pulled forth as much happiness as he could and bellowed, *Expecto Patronum!* His unchanging Patronus, the great stag, erupted from the tip of his wand and barreled towards the Dementor, causing it to quickly glide away. While it was retreating, Harry cast a strong spell to immobilize it until he could figure out what to do with it. "All right, Percy?"

"All right," said the shaken man, chest moving in and out with his fast breathing.

Not so pompous now, are you, git? Harry thought snidely before moving forward.

The first chamber they came to was Transfigured into a large study; literally thousands of books lined the shelves on the walls and even the ceiling. "Good Lord," Harry muttered.

"What's that smell?" Percy asked, quickly pulling a silk handkerchief from his pocket to cover his nose.

Harry smelled it, too. The entire room reeked of death. Moving towards the exit near the rear and passing a couch, he was startled to find Hermione. She was sprawled out on the floor with her long, bushy hair fanned out around her, most of it grey. Her body was stiff and decomposing. No tears came to Harry's eyes, but he felt the pang of loss all the same. He'd given up on her years prior, but when Percy had told him about finding her location, he'd dared to hope again.

"Hermione," he breathed. "What happened to you?" He noticed her wand was broken and at her side. "Did your wand break on your fall?" They would never know what had happened, but he had a suspicion that she'd fallen prey to the Dementor.

"I'm sorry, Harry," Percy said sincerely from behind him. "I didn't know she was... dead."

Harry nodded and looked at the massive desk across the room. He quickly went to it and found many open books, a cup half full of tea, a moldy half-eaten scone, and a journal. He opened the journal and turned to the last entry. It was dated only a month earlier.

The new potion is nearly ready. I will finally have Severus back after all these years. Once he drinks it, I can use the incantation I've created on the Dementor. The part of him that holds Severus' soul will be expelled and then drawn to the body that has the potion. I can only hope that all of my research and the years I've given will not have been for nothing. I pray that this works. So many times I've tried and failed and have been heartbroken. He deserved so much better than what he got. My sweet, no, my bloodthirsty Harry did this to him and didn't care that I was gathering proof of his testimony. Harry did this to me. I know he did. Ron told me.

Harry blanched.

I've not seen Ron in years now. I imagine he's not too interested in meeting with me any longer. He said that I've gone mad the last time we met, trying to get me to stay with him, but he still remained loyal to me and promised to not tell Harry that I'm alive and still in England. I suppose it's got something to do with my living with a Dementor in such close proximity. I admit freely that there is nothing much to be happy about, and I've lived most of my years in constant, though necessary, despair. It's been draining my powers steadily over the years, not much, mind, but enough for me to feel a difference now. I'm not so thick as to constantly stay here, but it has been a long time since I've taken some real time for just myself. I used to spend at least every other weekend out near the beach, rejuvenating myself and building my strength back up. I do feel better when I'm in the sunshine and tending the roses, too. Maybe I'll prune them later today. That would be nice. They really brighten up the place. Anyway, Ron will be the first person that I contact once I finally get this right.

"That bloody bastard," Harry said, ignoring Percy's questioning stare.

My foot still hurts terribly, and I have a terrible limp and nearly always fall as I stump around. Thanks to the damn uneven cave floor with its ruddy, jagged edges! It's a pity that I haven't any Skele-Gro with me. It's worth it, however, and if the bone I retracted can be used to bring Severus back to form, I don't mind. Sounds like the Dementor is banging about. I hope he's not gotten loose again, pesky thing. It's getting harder to keep him locked up, and my talent with charms has greatly diminished it seems...spells not holding as they should mostly.

"My God," Harry breathed, sitting down hard on the chair near the desk. "Snape is here," he told Percy.

Looking aghast, Percy quickly drew his wand, pointing it unsteadily as he turned around in circles. It was apparent that he thought Snape would jump out at him. Harry ignored his dramatics and quickly went to the next chamber. An even fresher fragrance of death assailed his nostrils. That...combined with the sight before him...caused him to stagger. In a large four-poster bed was a body. There was no mistaking whose body it was either. It wasn't as badly decomposed as Hermione's. He'd likely died after Hermione or near the same time, both bodies starving to death...if she'd had her soul sucked out by the Dementor, that is. If she died instantly in her fall, then it would have taken Snape a week or two to join her, as he'd have had nobody to feed him or keep his body alive. The man's hair, hardly any grey at all, was much longer than it

had been, though it still hung about his face and body limply. It was Severus Snape.

Ignoring Percy's gasp behind him, Harry moved forward and stood next to the bed, eyeing Snape's grey nightshirt, which was partly unbuttoned and revealing a sparse patch of dark hair over a pale chest. It was then that he noticed the duvet was drawn back and away just to the left of Snape; it was as if someone had gotten up and hadn't tidied the bed. He leaned closer, holding his breath, not wanting to inhale Snape's death scent, and looked at the pillow. Utterly gobsmacked, his finger traced the indentation on the pillow...obviously left by a head...and picked up a long strand of brownish-colored hair. Hermione's hair. She'd been sleeping in the bed with him!

Feeling sick, Harry quickly fled the rooms and made his way out of the tent to vomit on the grass, breathing in the fresh air yet still smelling the death-scented perfume of the cave. Another scent found its way to him. Roses. Hermione's Roses.

He knew immediately that he'd never again see, smell, or think of roses without associating them with the stench of death and the horrible life that his friend had been forced to live... of her own volition.

This is not my fault. I never sent that Dementor! It dawned on Harry then; it had to have been Ron that had sent it. It was likely why he'd never confided that he knew what happened to Hermione. He could have put the blame on anyone else, but with Harry's hostile feelings for Snape so widely known, he'd been an easy scapegoat.

After Harry and Ginny had gone their separate ways, Ron and he had drifted even further apart. It wasn't that his friend didn't understand their need to seek happiness elsewhere, but he and Ron simply spent less time at each other's homes. Their kids had grown, and times had changed.

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Harry, Ron, and Percy stood alone and looked down at the large mound of earth that covered the remains of their friend. They figured she'd want to lie near that sea on that rocky bit of coast.

"I think it's right good of you to let her be buried with him," Ron said, nodding towards the fresh grave.

"Yes, well, I'm not that much of a monster. If she'd needed help that badly, I'd have given it to her. I am the fucking Minister of Magic and have been for years. Anything would have been better for her than this," Harry said bitterly. "She chose him in life, so I can choose to give him to her in death."

"Mate, look..."

"Don't 'mate' me, Ron. You lied to her. You told her that/ sent that Dementor after Snape. Thought she was a bit close to Snape even after he was in prison, did you?"

"No... She-she was mental, I tell you. You didn't see her and hear the crazy shite she said. Something was wrong with her. No matter what I'd say, she wouldn't hear my words...only what she imagined."

"Yeah," Harry said sarcastically, "guess living with a Dementor and a soulless body can do that to a person." He held up his hand as Ron went to speak further.

Percy puffed out his chest. "That will be all, Ronald. The Minister would like a moment of silence."

Both Harry and Ron glared at Percy, though he didn't seem to notice, as he was placing a single rose atop the grave. "Rest in peace," he said quietly, sounding more professional than sincere.

Harry Disapparated away.

Percy looked at Ron with disgust. "Friends don't let friends live with Dementors." That said, he quickly Disapparated, trailing after Harry, hoping to be of service.*should get a pay raise for finding her and putting an end to the mystery of what happened to Snape. I wonder if I'll be promoted.*

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**Southern's Notes:** A bit odd and makes you wonder, doesn't it? How far would you go for the one you love? Where does love stop and obsession start? I normally like cheerful endings, but someone I knew well was murdered a few days before I wrote this. I suppose I dwelled on death a bit and had to get it out of my system. Cheers.

*This is inspired by something Amethyst said to me and is dedicated to her. I've been heavily influenced by William Faulkner and his tale, "A Rose for Emily." If you'd like to read it, you can find it at the following link:*

[http://xroads.virginia.edu/~drbr/wf\\_rose.html](http://xroads.virginia.edu/~drbr/wf_rose.html)

Enjoy.