

"And Rose and Hugo?"

"Honestly? We've been together for six months. I think they'll be fine with it. After all their father has put them through this last year, I don't think you and I will be a problem for them."

Sweeping an unruly length of hair behind her ear, Severus stroked Hermione's cheek. "Do you know what you're saying?"

"Yeah, I do. It's time to start living my life." Throwing her arm over his waist and her leg over his, Hermione closed her eyes. "Get some sleep."

Severus couldn't help the grin that spread across his face. "I love you."

Hermione yawned. "Mmm, I love you, too. Sleep...I have breakfast duty in three hours."

The only sound in the quiet room was the crackling of the fire as sleep overtook the two in the bed.

-fini-

A/N: As the title says, better late than never. A really late response to the 2 to 6 challenge on WIKTT. The challenge ended August 17, 2003, so I'm about nine years late in answering it (or eight years, 9 months, and 29 days to be exact). Can't say why it struck me now, but well ... here it is. Canon compliant through *that* epilogue mostly, then off into my own world where Severus lived and Hermione and Ron are divorced.

A grateful thank-you to Shug for her support, her time, her general enthusiasm for Dances and all my work, and for beta'ing this story for me. Thank you for stepping outside of your busy life to help me. I truly appreciate your help and your friendship.

And yes, Dances is still in the works, this just seemed to get in my way first.

Pearle

Chicago 2012

Challenge requirements:

All stories must begin and end with the paragraphs below.

All stories must feature Hermione Granger and Severus Snape in some manner.

Stories should be complete and should not exceed 2,000 words (about 6/7 pages) .

Stories must take place between the hours of 2:00 a.m. and 6:00 a.m.

Use only one of the following in the story:

Lucius Malfoy

Mrs. Norris

Fred Weasley

Voldemort

Neville Longbottom

(All other characters other than this list of five are fair game)

Mention at least one of these fanon creations/mainstays:

Dark Revel(s)

Contraceptive Charm

Snape or Hermione's personal scent

Ars Alchemica

Wizard's Weekly

Black Silk Boxers

The story must start with:

A scream rent the silent night air, startling the young lady in the Head Girl's room awake. Eyes rapidly scanning the room, she searched for the source of the banshee howl. Seeing nothing moving within the room, she gently nudged her companion. Screams in the night were not unusual at Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry...what with the large population of ghosts and other fantastical beings, but something about this one made her tremble with fear. The one sharing her bed was still sound asleep. He made a sound very much like a sigh and shifted position, but other than that showed no signs of stirring.

"Wake up!" Hermione Granger said, poking more firmly.

His eyes finally opened, and he opened his mouth as if to speak...

And must end with:

Sleep overtook the two in the bed.