

Fairy Tales

by sylvanawood

Summary: Hermione and Severus help Poppy with patients who don't want to wake up. This is an older story, it was written for the OWL House Cup.

Chapter 1

Chapter 1 of 6

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Disclaimer: Nothing you recognise belongs to me, I just play.

A/N1: Thank you, Janus, fellow Slytherin, for beta-reading!

A/N2: In 2009, the wonderful but now closed archive OWL held a competition called the OWL House Cup. It was madness in more than one sense; competition between the houses was fierce. I was one of the Slytherins and we fought hard. We didn't win but we gave the others a run for their money. Rules were that each review, each posted chapter, posted drabble, posted story gave you points. A minimum-100-word drabble gave you as many points as a 3000 word chapter. You can imagine that a lot of 100-word drabbles were written and posted. And so this story came into existence. I never got as many reviews since, which is enlightening, since most of these reviews were made for House points. To be fair, I never wrote as many reviews since as I did then, too. Astonishingly, after OWL closed, some people asked me to post the fairy tales again, so some must have actually liked it. Mind you, it was written in a rush and I'm not the greatest of writers at the best of times. It was written in approx. 100-word pieces, I've gathered them all in larger chapters with chapter breaks where I find them logical. You've been warned. Here it is.

A/N3: This is a collection of fairy tales that were shamelessly plagiarised, twisted, garbled and beaten into submission. My sincerest apologies go out to Hans Christian Andersen and Ludwig Bechstein.

There is a German version of this tale already posted. They are different language versions, not translations, since I write in both English and German.

***I've noticed that the tales aren't as well known as I thought they were, therefore I'll give you links to the original versions. In part one, I used:

The Brave Tin Soldier: http://hca.gilead.org.il/tin_sold.html

The Man Without A Heart: <http://web.archive.org/web/20120518232740/http://www.rickwalton.com/folktale/pink26.htm>

The Snow Queen: http://hca.gilead.org.il/snow_que.html

I hope you enjoy reading them as much as I did.

A/N4: I know it is bad style to have the Author's notes longer than the actual chapter. I shut up now.

Chapter 1

Everyone expected Hermione Granger to take up an apprenticeship in the Ministry of Magic after the war, but she'd surprised everyone by deciding to get training as a Healer. When someone asked her why she didn't want to make a career in magical law enforcement in the Ministry, she replied that she wanted to learn something useful after all the fighting and suffering caused by the war. She wanted to do something that would help all people, and what better and more noble profession was there than that of Healer?

There would still be time for politics later, she claimed. She was still young and, being a witch, could expect to have a long life span.

No one seemed to be able to change her mind, not even her boyfriend, Ron, who was of the opinion that she should work in the Ministry. There she'd have more time to take care of him.

The two of them were fighting constantly, and Hermione often wondered if Ron really was in love with her, or more with the idea that all three friends would soon become part of one big happy family.

When Hermione told Ron about her doubts, he became very angry and accused her of caring only about her career. This caused such a violent fight that they finally decided to separate.

Hermione was very sad about their break-up, but she thought that it would be far better to go their separate ways now than to live together unhappily for years. She made every effort to keep their friendship alive at least, and with that, she succeeded.

Two years after the beginning of her training, Hermione had learned everything St. Mungo's could teach her. She had finished her training in half the time it usually took to finish an apprenticeship as a Healer. She had passed her exams with a flourish and now all that was left for her was to go through her practical year.

Hermione received many offers for that practical year, but she decided to spend it in the Hogwarts hospital wing. The many wild, magical accidents of the children there would give her necessary hands-on training as a Healer. Poppy Pomfrey was a very experienced nurse, and Hermione was certain that Hogwarts would provide her with the extra experience she needed. Furthermore, she'd be able to subtly and carefully work on the house-elf issue.

Hermione enjoyed the first four weeks at Hogwarts very much. It was good to see her old teachers again, and Hagrid was delighted when she visited him in his hut.

She had just become accustomed to the usual school routine again when she noticed one morning that Poppy looked very unhappy.

"What's the matter with you?" she asked. "Are you feeling unwell?"

"Oh," said Poppy, "I am well, but I have a patient... uh... well, I would have needed to tell you anyway... just come with me."

Hermione gave her a questioning look, but Poppy merely put a finger to her lips and took Hermione's hand in hers. She led her to the portrait of Janus Thickey, which hung in a niche, and tapped her wand against the frame three times.

"Password?" Janus Thickey asked gently.

"Snake's den," Poppy whispered.

The portrait swung to the side and revealed an opening that was just large enough for an adult.

"Snake's den?" Hermione asked after the door had closed behind them and they were following a corridor leading downwards.

Poppy nodded and smiled lopsidedly. "You'll see. I hope you'll not be too shocked. You're about to see somebody whom the world believes to be dead."

"Who?" asked Hermione, her heart beating wildly in her throat.

"It's Severus Snape."

"Snape has survived?" Hermione almost screamed. "But that is fantastic. Why is that a secret?"

You'll understand in a moment, Hermione," said Poppy, sounding very sad.

When both women finally arrived at the end of the corridor, Poppy opened another door by speaking her own name loudly and touching the door with her hand.

"We shall teach the door to recognise you," she said to Hermione before she led her into a small room.

Hermione, who had expected something like a prison cell, was pleasantly surprised. The room was small, but airy and brightly lit. It was a typical hospital room with a bed, night table, a few chairs and a cabinet. A man was lying on the bed.

His eyes were closed and he seemed to be asleep. The skin was sallow, and he looked thin, almost gaunt, which made his already impressive nose appear even larger in his thin face.

The black hair that framed his face had a greasy shine; a few strands were stuck to his forehead. He was sweating profusely.

"He's been like that for several days," Poppy explained.

"How has he been before?" asked Hermione while she was moistening a piece of cloth and carefully wiping the sweat from her old teacher's face. This didn't seem to give him any relief, and she noticed his heavy, rattled breathing.

"He's been in a coma most of the time," Poppy told her. "After we'd found him and discovered that he was alive, we were busy feeding him enough blood-replenishing potion to stabilise him and at least partially heal the wound. Nagini's venom made that very difficult, but we made discreet inquiries at St. Mungo's, and their experience with Arthur Weasley helped us here.

"Initially, I wanted to move Severus to St. Mungo's, but Minerva thought that it would be better if he stayed here. It wasn't certain that he'd survive anyway. She's saved his life with that decision, most likely. You know how volatile the general attitude was towards Death Eaters at that time.

Hermione nodded. With Harry's help and a huge effort, they had managed to get the Malfoy family safely to the Ministry. Snape would have been attacked as well, had he been out there. Everyone knew that he was the murderer of Albus Dumbledore and he hadn't made any friends as the horrible Hogwarts Headmaster under Voldemort's

reign, either.

"Later, when people had calmed down again, Severus was in a fairly stable condition. Kingsley was of the opinion that Severus' best chance to find back to himself would be in his accustomed environment," Poppy continued. "I didn't mind having him in my care, but he never really woke up. Or maybe he never wanted to wake up. Rennervate only ever made him half-awake - just enough to be fed."

"This isn't working any longer, though. A few days ago he started to have trouble breathing, and he is sweating a lot. There is neither fever nor signs of any other illness. He's not eating and it is has become extremely difficult to give him water. I'm afraid we're going to lose him if this goes on." Poppy took a handkerchief from her robe and dabbed at her eyes.

"There has to be something we can do," Hermione said passionately. She was very happy that Severus Snape, unsung hero of both Voldemort wars, and the bravest man she ever knew, had survived the attack of the giant snake. She wouldn't just watch him die now.

"I've run out of ideas." Sadness darkened Poppy's voice. "I've tried all the potions and healing charms I could think of, but nothing helped. It's as if he doesn't want to live any more."

"There is a possibility that he's trapped inside his own head. I've seen similar cases. He needs to be shown how he can free himself."

"How do we do that?"

"There is a new therapy. Healer Hagen Leid from Austria developed it. You need to use Legilimency, absorb the patient's thoughts, extract these observations from your own mind and analyse them in a Pensieve."

"I've read about that," Poppy said. "But I lack the experience to use it, and I doubt very much that they can do it in St. Mungo's."

"Some Healers can do it. Dr. Leid was a guest Healer at St. Mungo's for three months and taught the new therapy. I can try it if you think that we can risk it, Poppy."

Poppy took a deep breath and scrutinised Hermione critically. "I think it's the only thing left we can do for him here. When will you start?"

"Why not now?" Hermione asked. "I have time, and it looks like you have some time to spare, too. All we need is a crystal ball that tells us when we're needed in the hospital wing."

"I always have mine with me," Poppy said and took a small crystal ball out of her pocket. "Very well then, what do you need?"

"I need some peace and quiet, a phial for my memories and a Pensieve. Otherwise... you should be here to help if his condition changes or he starts to struggle while I'm in his mind. Things like that happen sometimes."

"I'll watch over you, both of you." Poppy reassured her and sat down on one of the chairs. Hermione took her wand out and cast a quick Rennervate over the sleeping man. Snape's black eyes opened and he looked at her, but he seemed to neither see her nor recognise anything else. He only breathed more laboriously, and more sweat was streaming down his temples.

"*Legilimens!*" Hermione said and entered his mind.

An hour later, she returned to her own mind. Quickly, she extracted the memories of what she'd seen in the past hour and dropped them into a small phial. Then she gratefully drank some of the water Poppy had offered. In the meantime, Poppy had Summoned the Pensieve.

Hermione poured her memories of the last hour into the Pensieve and prodded the contents with her wand. Both women brought their heads close to the surface of the silvery liquid and looked inside.

The Steadfast Chess Piece

Hermione and Poppy found themselves in the Headmaster's office. It must have been during Dumbledore's tenure, because dishes with lemon sherbets, Pepper Imps and Cockroach Clusters were standing everywhere.

A chessboard with pewter chess pieces was set up on a small table in front of the fireplace. Several Chocolate Frog cards were placed upright on the mantelpiece.

All the chess pieces looked quite normal except for one. It was a bishop and its nose was larger than the noses of the other pieces. The long-nosed bishop was under the orders of the white king and sent around on errands all the time. On top of that, the black king had nothing better to do than ordering him around as well. The poor bishop had to run and run, and never had a moment's peace.

The only fun the bishop ever had was to look at the Chocolate Frog cards. One of the cards depicted a pretty young girl with red hair who looked lively and intelligent. She wore a beautiful blue silk dress adorned with a large silver star. She jumped and danced through her card and never seemed to be at rest.

This would be a good wife for me; we would be very compatible, the bishop thought and stared at her. He had no idea how they could meet, however. When he wasn't running around on orders of the black or white king, he always stared at the pretty girl, but she never looked back.

One evening, the headmaster forgot to put the chess pieces back into their box, which would have been the sensible thing to do, since all the chess pieces were rather aggressive. If both parties hadn't been stored separately, they would have knocked each other over the head, just as they did this evening. The pawns were communicating with their fists, the queens argued loudly with their swords and the knights were perfecting the chaos by popping up here, there and everywhere. The rooks stayed where they were supposed to be, however. They had to protect the kings and they were taking their work very seriously. The bishops did what they did best: they were running around.

Since the rulers were occupied with other things, no one told the bishops exactly where they were supposed to go, and our bishop with the big nose ran to the edge of the chessboard, as close to the Chocolate Frog card with the pretty girl as he could get. Oh! To be close to her, just once! Then, perhaps, she'd actually look at him and learn to love him? Perhaps he could run along the edge of the board and then jump onto the chair facing the fireplace?

Alas, he didn't have time to follow through with his plan, because Peeves the Poltergeist entered the Headmaster's office when the chaos was at its peak. He was turning everything upside down that wasn't secured with sticking charms.

When Peeves saw the chessboard, he laughed out loud and threw it off the table. The chess pieces were flying high and falling to the floor in a tangled mess; the bishop with the big nose was hurled higher up and further away than all the other pieces and landed on the windowsill. Peeves saw him there and laughed even louder. He

opened the window, and threw the bishop out.

The bishop accepted his fate stoically. He didn't scream or whinge but prepared himself for impact. Impact came soon, but instead of shattering on the floor, the bishop got stuck with his nose between two cobblestones.

The bishop didn't like being stuck there at all, but he didn't have to wait long. Peeves was following him down, making faces at him, and throwing him into one of the boats that brought the first years from Hogsmeade to Hogwarts every year.

"Swim, chess piece," Peeves chuckled and gave the boat a shove.

The boat floated out onto the lake, and a big wave made it roll violently. This caused the Giant Squid to investigate; it wanted to know why a boat was floating on the lake at that time of the year. One of the squid's tentacles reached into the boat and searched around until it found the bishop.

The squid took hold of the bishop and studied it closely. It didn't quite know what to do with a chess piece, though, and so it threw him away.

The bishop sank like a stone. *This will be the death of me*, he thought. *I'll never see daylight again. I wonder what the pretty girl in the Chocolate Frog card is doing right now. I wonder if she thinks of me, sometimes.*

He didn't have time to ponder that question much longer, because a big fish came along and swallowed the bishop whole. Now the poor chess piece couldn't see a thing, but at least it was in a warm place. The bishop decided to settle down for a long sleep.

Alas, it didn't take long at all until a bright light woke the bishop up again. He blinked into the light, and realised that the fish must have been caught and cooked, and now lay on a plate, about to be cut up and served.

"Here is my old bishop with the big nose," a well-remembered voice uttered. It was the Headmaster, and he was the one who had wanted to eat the fish with the bishop inside. "What a funny coincidence," the Headmaster said and laughed. After he had finished his meal, he took the bishop back to his office and put him onto the chessboard, where he belonged.

The bishop was happy. He looked at the girl in the card; he had missed her so much. He was wondering if she had missed him too, but she was still jumping around wildly in her card and paid him no heed.

When the Headmaster sat down at the chessboard he usually played against himself because he couldn't find a skilled opponent the bishop immediately felt at home again. However, the game turned out to be very violent, and both queens fought with all their might for dominance. And so it happened that the black queen hit the white bishop with her sword, and once again he was flying through the air.

The steadfast bishop landed in the fireplace, in the middle of the hottest flames. He looked at the girl in the Chocolate Frog card and, for the first time since he had known her, she looked back at him. This warmed his heart, and he felt so happy that he cried pewter tears. Or maybe it was the heat of the flames that made him melt; he didn't know.

The flames crackled, flared high and created a sudden gust of hot air. The Chocolate Frog card with the pretty girl in it began to wobble and after a long moment of indecision, it fell from the mantelpiece.

The card with the girl landed in the middle of the hottest flames, where it flared up brightly.

So she did love me after all, to have flared so hotly thought the bishop and his heart felt very light before he melted.

The next morning, when the house-elves cleaned the fireplace, all that remained of the pretty girl was the silver star, and the only thing that remained of the bishop with the big nose was his pewter heart. Both were swept out of the fireplace and thrown away together.

Breathing deeply, Poppy Pomfrey and Hermione Granger emerged from the Pensieve.

"What an odd dream that was," Poppy said. "So this kind of thing keeps him occupied while he is lying here, still and unconscious?"

"I am afraid so." Hermione looked very sad. "He seems to blend Muggle fairy tales with his own dreams and desires and gets caught in his own web of dreams. I don't know if I can help him out of that, but one thing is clear."

"And that is?"

"He still yearns for Lily Potter, Harry's mother, although he knows instinctively that she didn't love him other than as a childhood friend. I'm afraid that he won't want to wake up as long as he is driven by this longing."

"Oh, the poor man," Poppy cried. "Such a deep, tragic love, and even now he finds no peace! Shouldn't we just leave him be?"

"No!" Hermione cried passionately. "He is far too young to die of unrequited love. He could be free now. After all these years, he could start a new life. There is a lot of life still has to offer, especially for him, I'm certain about that. I have to get him out of there; I owe him that. We all owe him that."

"If you think so," Poppy said and wiped the sweat from Snape's brow. He hadn't moved at all while the two women had been busy with his memories and dreams.

"What are you going to do now?"

"I'll get some rest and tomorrow I'll go back in." Hermione pointed at Snape's forehead. "Perhaps I'll come up with something. I might be able to manipulate his dreams while I'm in his mind. Perhaps I can come up with something to change them, to free him from this trap. I won't be able to take you along that way, though."

"If you think that it will help," Poppy said and handed Hermione a glass with pumpkin juice.

Hermione took a big gulp and gave Poppy a thoughtful glance. "I'm not certain, but it is definitely worth a try."

Chapter 2

Chapter 2 of 6

Summary: Hermione and Severus help Poppy with patients who don't want to wake up. This is an older story, it was written for the OWL House Cup.

Disclaimer: Nothing you recognise belongs to me, I just play.

A/N1: Thank you, Janus, fellow Slytherin, for beta-reading!

A/N2: Again: this was written for the 2009 OWL cup as a drabble series.

Fairy Tales: 1. Severus Sleeps

Chapter 2

The next morning after breakfast, Hermione went back to Snape's room in the dungeons. Perhaps she would succeed waking him up.

After casting a Rennervate spell, she entered his his mind. "Legilimens!"

The Man Without a Heart, but With a Big Nose

Hermione found herself in a small cabin in a forest. A man lived in this cabin all alone, without wife or children, or even friends or pets to keep him company. The man had a very big nose, lank greasy hair, sallow skin and crooked teeth. He knew very well that people thought him ugly, and that's why he kept to himself most of the time.

One fine day, he looked out of the window and saw three Hogwarts students walk by his cabin.

"What are you doing in the middle of the Forbidden Forest?" Snape that was the man asked the three students.

"We are the Marauders," one of the three said. "We are going out into the world to find a bride for each or us because we are so bored. Besides, we would have to do all the housework by ourselves, otherwise. We've left one Marauder behind; he's holding the fort, but we've promised to bring him a bride, too.

"If you'll bring a bride for me as well, on your way back, you can stay overnight and find as much to eat and drink as you could wish for."

The three Marauders didn't need to be asked twice; they ate drank heartily, slept deeply and without a care, and met the lonely man again at breakfast.

"You can take as much rations with you as you wish," the man said. "Just bring me a woman to keep me company."

"We'll gladly do that," the Marauders promised. They thanked the man politely and went on their way.

Here is my chance, Hermione thought. She knew the story that had trapped Snape in his dreams this time. *Perhaps I can manipulate the ending*, she thought and waited until the Marauders returned before she quickly cast a Confundus Charm on them and then did some impressive Transfiguration work.

Instead of Sirius Black, Peter Pettigrew and Remus Lupin, now Harry Potter, Ronald Weasley and Neville Longbottom were walking through the Forbidden Forest. Ginny Weasley, Luna Lovegood and Hannah Abbott were coming along as their brides. Hermione joined them as the extra bride.

When the party reached the cabin in the forest, the man with the big nose looked out of the window and greeted Hermione's friends.

"I see that you've brought a bride for me."

"Err, no," Harry stammered, looking confused. "She is meant for the one who stayed at home. Who was that again?" He scratched his head.

"What? You didn't bring one for me? You'll pay for this!" the man yelled and waved his wand. Immediately, Hermione's friends and their brides were Transfigured into large pebbles and kept lying at the door.

"You shall be my bride," Snape said to Hermione. "I'll go away now, but you can start cleaning up around here, and then you can cook me a meal."

"I'll do that," Hermione said affably.

When the man came back in the evening, everything was neat and clean, and the food stood on the table.

He praised Hermione, but she looked at him with sad eyes. "What am I supposed to do if you die, dear husband, and I'm left all alone in the forest? I'll have to die as well, then."

"Don't be afraid," Snape said. "I won't die so quickly. I always carry a bezoar, and I've swallowed antivenin against Nagini's poison. I'm neither clumsy nor unskilled. Even the Killing Curse won't affect me, because I don't have a heart. I've hidden it in a secret place where it can't be harmed. As long as it remains there, safely, nothing will threaten me."

The next morning, he went away again. Hermione made a pretty, warm blanket for him, just in case he had hidden his heart in his bed. His heart could do with a bit of love, she thought. Perhaps then he'd get over his stubborn insistence to stick firmly to his old childhood love.

When Snape came back in the evening and saw the beautiful blanket, he wondered and confronted Hermione with it.

"I thought I'd do something good for your heart by sewing a nice blanket for it," she explained. "A warm heart is happier than a cold one."

"Always the know-it-all," Snape grumbled. "What gives you the idea that my heart is hidden in my bed?" He frowned fiercely and went away.

When Hermione decorated the door with flowers the next day, intending to do something good for his heart again, he only rolled his eyes. "My heart isn't hidden there either, you inquisitive creature. Why are you so insistent on learning where it is?"

"If I'm supposed to be your wife, I ought to know where your heart is, dear husband. I need to take care of it, to protect it. Besides, I'd be lost here, all alone, if something should happen to you."

Snape sighed. It looked like Hermione would get what she wanted merely by being so insistent.

"If something should happen to me, you insufferable know-it-all, then you would merely take my wand and transfigure the stones back into people. The wand is hidden over the door. But nothing will happen to me; my heart is well-hidden."

"But where is it?" Hermione asked.

Snape rolled his eyes again and sniffed. "You never give up, do you?"

"Never!" Hermione confirmed and smiled.

"Very well. The heart is kept in a castle. The castle is surrounded by a moat. No one can swim across that moat, and no one can break through the walls of the castle. And finally, should anyone be able to enter the castle after all, he won't be able to take hold of my heart. It's hidden in a small bird which flies around all the time and can't be caught." Snape looked at her distrustfully. "Something isn't right with you. My bride shouldn't be so nosy."

In that moment, Hermione knew that she had lost her influence on the outcome of the dream. She suddenly found herself back in the role of an uninvolved observer. The young bride had changed. She now had red hair, green eyes and was very beautiful. She was Lily Evans.

Hermione knew what would come next. And when the man with the big nose had left his cabin the next morning, a young man appeared at the window who looked remarkably like Harry Potter. It was the fourth Marauder, James Potter, who had left his home to search for his friends. When James saw the pretty girl, he found that he liked her very much. He knocked at the door and asked her if she'd seen people passing by.

Lily didn't hesitate. She told James about his friends and revealed Snape's secrets. She provided him with ample food and drink, and the next day, James went away to catch the bird with the heart of the lonely man.

James was a carefree fellow, and thus he invited everyone and anyone in the vicinity who felt like it to share his meals.

First, a large ox ate with him, then a boar and finally a raptor. All three promised James to help him if he needed them.

Soon after, James arrived at the castle. The ox helped by drinking all the water from the moat, the boar ran against the castle's walls until they broke, and the raptor caught the little bird with the hidden heart.

James was very glad and went on his way back to the forest. When he arrived at the cabin, Lily hid him under the bed, because the man with the big nose was about to come home.

"What's the matter with you, dear husband?" Lily asked. "You look ill."

"I don't feel very well," Snape said. "Something must have happened to my heart in order for me to have become so sick."

Lily didn't comment on that and served him dinner.

James, who was still hiding under the bed, thought that Snape deserved to suffer a bit. He thought that Snape hadn't acted very nobly by cursing his friends with their brides and keeping the bride who was meant for James. That's why he pinched the captured bird just a bit.

The man with the big nose twitched and moaned.

James enjoyed seeing Snape suffer, and so he pinched the bird a bit more.

Snape fell from his chair and moved no more.

James discovered that he had accidentally pinched the little bird to death. The man with the big nose was dead now, and even a Mandrake Restorative Draught wouldn't be able to bring him back to life. James and Lily lifted the curse from their friends; everyone was happy, and they all went home together.

Hermione looked down at the dead man with great sorrow. She kissed his pale lips and left his dreams, crying. Completely exhausted, she fainted.

"I didn't have the impression that I'd been very successful. The tale took its course despite my efforts at changing its outcome. In the end, Snape was still trapped in his web and wanted to die." She wiped a few stray tears away. "I am so very tired and I feel cold. I need some rest, but tomorrow I'll try once again."

Poppy nodded, covered Hermione with a thick handcrafted blanket, and went away.

Early next morning, Hermione was at Snape's side again. She was still so tired that she could hardly stand upright, but she refused Poppy's suggestion to take a longer break.

"I just have to try this now, Poppy," she said and looked at her colleague sadly. "The poor man is trapped in his dreams and he is suffering a great deal. I won't give up before he wakes up."

"Better be careful lest you are forced to give up, Hermione. You wouldn't be the first Healer who broke down on the job because she thought that she was invincible and knew her own body best. When you're ill or dead, you won't be of any use to your patient, you know."

"You're right, Poppy, and if I can't make a difference this time, I'll take a longer break. But this once, I must try again. I don't feel that bad, don't worry."

Chapter 3

Chapter 3 of 6

Summary: Hermione and Severus help Poppy with patients who don't want to wake up. This is an older story, it was written for the OWL House Cup.

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Fairy Tales: 1. Severus Sleeps

Chapter 3

"Don't say that I didn't warn you," Poppy said and brought an additional warm blanket for Hermione.

Hermione took her wand and spoke. "Rennervate!"

Snape's eyes opened, and for a short moment it looked as if he were awake, but it was an illusion. Hermione swallowed, took his hand and said, "Legilimens!" And once again she entered into Snape's mind. She would try to actively interfere with his dream, but she'd have to find a good opportunity first. She hoped that Snape would once again be trapped in a dream that was based on a well-known fairy tale. He seemed to have been told the same fairy tales as a child as she had. This wasn't really all that surprising since they both had spent their childhood years among Muggles.

The Clever Snow Queen

Snape's dream transported Hermione to Hogwarts. She stood in a small room in the Headmaster's tower and looked at a large mirror.

I wonder if this is the Mirror of Erised she asked herself. She had heard a great deal about that mirror of desires, but never actually seen it. She stepped closer and looked inside, curious what it would show her. At first, the mirror showed her nothing at all, and then it replayed the last part of her own life. It showed her: how she had tried to wake Snape with Rennervate, how she had used Legilimency, how she had entered Snape's mind and how she now stood in front of the mirror to look inside.

This was supposed to be the Mirror of Erised? Impossible! Hermione thought. She decided to take a closer look at the mirror, and after some thorough searching, she finally she found an inscription on its back: 'Mirror of Hturt.'

But that one's been broken, Hermione thought, *if it ever existed at all...* The Mirror of Hturt had been made by a Hogwarts Headmaster, and it helped to find enchanted or magically concealed things or beings. If there had been such a mirror at Hogwarts in the past, Barty Crouch couldn't possibly have posed as Mad-Eye Moody, could he? She looked back into the mirror and it showed her how it broke into a million pieces; then it vanished.

Hermione rubbed her nose and wondered about the meaning of what she'd just seen when the room suddenly spun around her in a sickening manner. After a while the world calmed down again, and she found herself in a small, welcoming room where two children played amiably together. The little boy had black hair which was lank and slightly greasy. His nose was very big and hooked, his eyes black and inquisitive. The boy obviously was very poor; his clothes were shabby and he was very thin.

The little girl looked much better. She was very pretty, with red hair and green eyes. Of course Hermione knew immediately that the two children were Snape and Lily Evans.

Hermione had watched the playing children for some time when the door opened and an old woman entered the room.

"Gran, tell us a story!" the little girl cried.

"Do you see the white bees in front of the window?" the grandmother asked.

The children hurried to the window and looked outside. It was snowing.

"Are these really bees?" the little boy asked. He looked critically at the snow flurry and then looked back at the grandmother with a frown. "If these are bees, then where is their queen?"

"Look closely, Sev," the woman laughed. "You'll see that among all the snow flakes there is one that is larger than the others. That one is special."

"That snowflake will be larger, more beautiful and colder than the others. It's the Snow Queen."

"I don't believe this," Sev said and ran from the room. Lily's eyes followed him; she looked sad.

After a short while, the boy came back into the room; he had a magnifying glass in one hand and had brought a bit of the powdery snow with him.

"Look, Lily, that's what snow really looks like. It consists of crystals. Each snowflake is built like any other, and yet each of them is unique. They are very beautiful before they melt. In any case, they aren't bees."

"I don't want to know this," Lily said unhappily. "I prefer them to be bees." She went to the window and looked outside.

"You always want to study and analyse things, Sev," the grandmother said, not very friendly any longer. "One could think that you caught a splinter of the Mirror of Hturt in your eye."

"Even more nonsense," Sev said disdainfully, taking his magnifying glass and going home.

Hermione followed Sev into the neighbouring building. The children lived in two houses that were only separated by a rain pipe. They had large flower boxes in front of their

windows, with herbs and flowers in them, among them two beautiful rosebushes, which were Sev's favourite flowers. During the summer months, the children could visit each other by stepping out of their windows and crossing over the boxes into the neighbouring house.

Hermione now knew which fairy tale this was. They were still at the beginning. The Mirror of Hturt had been a wondrous thing, and according to rumour it had been broken into many pieces. There was a legend in the wizarding world that said that anybody who got a splinter of the mirror into their eye would be able to uncover every secret and would want to learn everything there was to learn. Hermione thought that this was a very good thing.

She had heard the fairy tale in its Muggle version as well. There, as usual, everything was twisted and turned upside down. The mirror in the Muggle tale was one that distorted everything that was beautiful and presented it as being ugly instead. Ugly things were shown as being beautiful. That whole idea was, of course, complete and utter rubbish.

Hermione had never liked that tale, but when she looked at Sev and Lily she understood why Snape was trapped in this particular fairy tale.

After thinking things through for a bit, Hermione smiled. She had an idea how she could change the outcome of the tale.

In the meantime, Sev got ready for bed and now stood at the window in his faded grey nightshirt. He looked outside and seemed to wonder if there was some truth behind the tale of the Snow Queen.

All the snowflakes were dancing wildly in the wind, but there was one, a large one, that glittered like a diamond in the moonlight.

That snowflake didn't whirl through the air like all the others, it landed on the flower box in front of Sev's window.

The snowflake grew and grew until, at last, it transformed into a woman. She was dressed in garments of white gauze, which looked like millions of starry snowflakes linked together. She was fair and beautiful, but looked as if made of ice...shining and glittering ice. Still she was alive, and her eyes sparkled like bright stars, and her hair stuck out of her head in wild bushy locks. She nodded towards the window, smiled and waved at Sev.

The little boy became frightened and ran away from the window. When he hesitantly looked back, the woman was gone.

The next day, Sev came into Lily's house with a pair of thick gloves and his sledge on his back.

"I'm allowed to go into the great square, where the other boys play. You had better stay at home, that's only something for men." And away he went.

In the great square, the boldest among the boys would often tie their sledges to the country people's carts and go with them a good way. This was capital. But while they were all amusing themselves, and Sev with them, a great sledge came by; it was painted white, and in it sat someone wrapped in a rough white fur and wearing a white cap.

The sledge drove twice round the square, and Sev fastened his own little sledge to it, so that when it went away, he followed with it. It went faster and faster right through the next street, until they drove out through the town gate. Then the snow began to fall so heavily that the little boy could not see a hand's breadth before him, but still they drove on. When Sev had enough, he tried to loosen the cord so that the large sled would go on without him, but he couldn't free his little sledge, and away they went like the wind. Then he called out loudly, but nobody heard him, while the snow beat upon him, and the sledge flew onwards.

The snowflakes became larger and larger, till they appeared like great white chickens. All at once the horses sprang to the side of the road, the great sledge stopped, and the person who had driven it rose up. The fur and the cap, which were made entirely of snow, fell off, and he saw a lady, tall and white with wild hair. It was the Snow Queen.

"We have driven well," said she, "but why do you tremble? Here, creep into my warm fur." Then she seated him beside her in the sledge, and as she wrapped the fur round him he felt as if he were sinking into a snowdrift.

"Are you still cold?" she asked, as she hugged him slightly.

Sev felt so cold that he felt as if he were going to die, but only for a moment; he soon seemed quite well again, and did not notice the cold around him. It seemed to him as if the snow Queen understood him as no one ever had before.

Sev wasn't at all afraid of the Snow Queen. He told her that he could levitate a feather and already brew some potions. She smiled to everything he said and they flew away. They flew high, up to the black clouds, and the storm blew and howled as if it were singing old songs. They flew over woods and lakes, sea and land.

Below them roared the wild wind; the wolves howled and the snow crackled; over them flew the black, screaming crows, and above all shone the moon, clear and bright. Sev looked up to the moon, through the long, long winter's night, and by day he slept at the feet of the Snow Queen.

When little Sev didn't return from sledging, Lily was very sad and cried bitterly. No one knew where Sev went; there wasn't a trace of him to be found, and everyone believed that he had fallen into the river and drowned. Lily didn't want to believe that.

When Spring came, Lily missed her best friend even more. After she cried a bit more, she decided to leave her home and search for Sev.

She put on her new red shoes and went down to the river, asking if it had swallowed Sev. When the river didn't answer, she jumped into a small boat and drifted down the river until she saw a pretty cottage in the midst of a lovely garden. The river seemed to think that she should interrupt her journey there, as it carried the boat to the shore.

"Hello, hello, is anybody home?" Lily cried.

An old woman who leaned on crutches came out of the house. She was wearing a large hat that was painted with flowers.

The old woman secured Lily's boat and invited her to come into the house with her. Lily told her why she was travelling on the river.

When Lily asked if the old woman had seen Sev passing by, the woman [replied that he hadn't come yet, but surely would arrive there later. She kept feeding cake and sweets to Lily.

The old woman had taken a liking to the girl and would have liked to keep the girl with her. That's why she went around her home, hiding and concealing everything she could find that could have reminded Lily of Sev books and roses first of all.

Lily loved the old woman's garden and soon she forgot completely why she had left home.

One day, however, quite by coincidence, she became aware of the roses on the old woman's hat. The crone had forgotten to hide the roses on her hat, and the beautiful flowers reminded Lily of Sev. When Lily ran out into the garden, suddenly all the rose bushes reappeared.

"Oh, how long have I been here, whiling my days away with the old woman?" Lily moaned. "I wanted to look for Sev! Don't you know where he is?" She asked the roses. "Do you think that he is dead and gone?"

"He isn't dead," the roses said. "We've been hidden below ground, where all the dead things are; we would have seen him. Sev wasn't there!"

"Thank Merlin!" said little Lily and went to the other flowers, looked into their calyxes and asked, "Don't you know where little Sev is?"

The flowers, however, were only interested in their own stories and none of them knew where Sev was. And so Lily decided that she would have to leave to continue her search.

"Merlin, how much time I've wasted? Unbelievable!" She exclaimed as she left the garden and noticed that autumn had come already.

"I shan't dawdle," Lily cried and started to run.

After a while she got very tired; she was only a child, after all, and her little feet were hurting. She was feeling very cold; the first snow had already fallen.

When she took a short break, a crow was hopping around in the snow, just in front of her.

"Have you seen Sev?" Lily asked.

The crow nodded thoughtfully and said, "Possibly, quite possibly."

"What? Do you think you have?" the little girl cried and kissed the crow with such might that she almost squeezed the poor bird to death.

The crow told Lily that in the kingdom where they now were, a beautiful and very clever princess had been searching for an equally beautiful and very clever groom. Many men had tried to solve her puzzles and pass her tests, but none had succeeded except for one. That boy had solved all the puzzles and had married the princess just a few days ago.

"That's got to be Sev," Lily said. "He's always been so very clever. He always wanted to read and learn new things. I always had to tear him away from his books when I wanted to play with him. Oh, how I miss him! It's so dull without him."

The crow didn't think that Lily would easily gain admission to the castle where the princess lived, poor and ragged as she looked. But they conceived of a plan to get Lily into the castle and then into the prince's chambers.

They succeeded with the help of a tame crow in the castle who was the fiancée of Lily's crow friend.

Lily had planned to sneak up to the boy and look at him to find out if it really was Sev, but the prince woke; he wasn't Sev. Instead of black, he had blond hair, just as his princess had, whose name was Narcissa. They insisted that Lily tell them Sev's story, and they were both very impressed by how clever Sev was.

The prince and the princess treated Lily very well and invited her to stay with them, but Lily wanted to go on with her search for Sev. The royal couple gave her magnificent warm clothes and a richly decorated coach complete with horses. They gave her cakes and other sweets so she wouldn't have to be hungry, and then she was on her way again.

They were going through a dark deep forest, but the carriage was glittering and glistening and could be seen from afar. It dazzled the eyes of some robbers, who could not bear to let it pass unmolested. They took away everything Lily possessed, except for the clothes she wore.

The robbers had planned to eat Lily for dinner, but a little robber-boy stopped them. He was strong-willed and obstinate, and took everything he wanted for himself. He always got his way with the other robbers.

The name of the little robber-boy was James.

"I want her to play with me," said James. "I want everything she has, and then she shall sleep beside me in my bed."

Lily didn't think that the little robber-boy was very nice, but after he had threatened to eat her for dinner, she told him about Sev and how dearly she loved Sev.

"You're supposed to love only me," James complained, "and that's why you will sleep with my animals tonight." He led Lily to a cave, where straw and blankets were stacked in one corner. Above them, on laths and perches, sat more than a hundred pigeons, and there was a reindeer in the cave.

"These all belong to me," James said proudly. He shook the reindeer by its horn and tormented the poor animal with his long knife

"Will you have that knife with you while you are asleep?" asked Lily, looking at James slightly afraid.

"I always sleep with the knife by me," said the boy and held the knife in front of Lily's face while he drew her against him with his other arm. "No one knows what may happen."

Lily thought that she could quite like James if only he weren't so rough all the time. That night she didn't sleep well at all, and that's why she heard the pigeons talk with each other.

The pigeons were telling each other how they had seen little Sev sitting in the Snow Queen's sledge and flying straight away to her castle.

Lily grew very excited. She asked the pigeons for details, and inquired again and again where the Snow Queen could have gone.

"Most likely she went to Lapland; there is always snow and ice there. Just ask the reindeer that's tethered down over there," one of the pigeons replied.

"There's ice and snow there; it is a blessed, magnificent country," the reindeer declared. "One jumps about freely there, in large glittering valleys. There the Snow Queen has her summer tent, but her castle is close to the North Pole, on an island called Spitsbergen."

"Oh, Sev, dear Sev!" Lily sighed.

"You must lie still now," the robber-boy said. "Else I push the knife into your belly."

In the morning, Lily told James everything she had learned from the wood pigeons, and the little robber-boy nodded earnestly and asked the reindeer, "Do you know where Lapland is?"

"Who should know that better than I?" said the reindeer with shining eyes. "I was born there. I grew up there and I romped about on the snow fields there."

"I would rather keep you here, but if you have to look for your Sev, then take the reindeer; it will show you the way to Lapland."

"Come back to me after you've freed your Sev."

"I'll gladly do that," Lily replied, finding the robber-boy quite interesting now. She liked that he was more interested in playing with her than in reading books.

When the reindeer was set free, it jumped high into the air with joy. The robber-boy helped Lily onto the reindeer's back, carefully fastened her to the beast and even gave her a cushion to sit on. He returned her warm clothes to her and gave her a pair of thick fur gloves.

Lily wept with joy.

"You are prettier when you smile," the robber-boy said. "Here, have two loaves of bread and a ham, so you won't have to go hungry."

The food was tied onto the reindeer's back. James opened the door, and Lily and the reindeer hurried away.

The reindeer ran north without pausing or tiring until they arrived at a small house, where they stopped. The owner of the house invited Lily and the reindeer inside; they were given a good meal and permitted to warm themselves up.

While Lily drank a cup of warm tea, the reindeer told Lily's story to the woman who lived in the house.

"You poor things!" the woman exclaimed. "You have a long way ahead of you still." She gave them a message for an acquaintance of hers and showed them the way. Even though it was dark already, they hurried on. The most beautiful Northern Lights were weaving and swirling in brilliant colours in the sky.

Finally, they arrived at the house of the woman's acquaintance.

Her house was so warm that Lily had to take off her warm clothes and the reindeer had to wear a chunk of ice on its head to be able to bear the heat.

The reindeer was flattering the woman, because it wanted her to help Lily.

"You are very clever and powerful," said the reindeer. "I know that you can tie all the winds of the world together with merely a thread. When a mariner unties one knot, he'll have good winds, if he unties another, there'll be a sharp breeze, and if he unties the third and fourth, there'll be storms so violent that the trees get uprooted."

"Why don't you give one of your potions to the little girl, to give her the strength of twelve men so she can defeat the Snow Queen?"

"The strength of twelve men!" exclaimed the woman. "That wouldn't be enough by far!" She turned away and started to read in a spell book.

The reindeer, however, didn't give up and begged and pleaded until the woman gave in.

"Little Sev really is staying with the Snow Queen. He finds everything there exactly to his liking; he feels very comfortable and is convinced that he is the luckiest boy in the world. He has a splinter of the Mirror of Hturt in his eye and strives to learn and become cleverer every day."

"The Snow Queen is the cleverest witch of her age and she never stops learning. The two get along famously."

"But can't you give anything to little Lily which would give her power over the situation?"

"I can't give her greater power than she holds already. Don't you see how powerful she already is? Don't you see how men and beasts strive to serve her? Her power is rooted deep in her heart and comes from her beauty and kindness. If she can't enter the Snow Queen's realm through her own means and free little Sev from the splinter in his eye so that he wants to stop reading and learning, then there is nothing we can do to help her."

The woman helped Lily onto the back of the reindeer and showed them the way.

"When you have delivered Lily to her destination, come back here quickly," she told the reindeer.

"My boots! My gloves!" cried little Lily, who felt the bitter cold. But the reindeer didn't dare to stop and turn around; it ran without pause until it came to the place the woman had described. There it put Lily down, said good-bye and ran back as fast as it could.

Poor Lily, who had neither shoes nor gloves, ran on as fast as she could. Suddenly an entire army of snowflakes appeared.

These snowflakes, however, didn't fall from the sky. The sky was clear and glittered with the northern lights. The snowflakes flew parallel to the ground and gained size the closer they came. Lily remembered how beautiful and delicate they had looked under the magnifying glass. Each snowflake consisted of ice crystals, Sev had told her.

These flakes, though, weren't ice crystals. They were living beings and the Snow Queen's vanguard. Some looked like snakes, others like badgers, some like eagles and lions were among them, too. The biggest and most powerful beings, however, were dragons and they didn't look sleepy at all.

Lily was scared when she saw these beings, but she remembered that she was a Gryffindor back at school, and that meant she had to be brave. Her courage reminded her that she had learned to cast a few spells, even though she was only a first year. Thus she could cast a warming spell over her feet. Lily berated herself because she hadn't thought about this earlier. She shook herself and resolutely walked towards the castle.

Little Sev, naturally, didn't know anything about this. He was sitting in the castle's library and reading as long as he could keep his eyes open.

It would take years for him to read all the books in here. The Snow Queen was nice to him; the servants were efficient and discreet; life in the Snow Queen's castle was good.

"Now I must hasten away to warmer countries," said the Snow Queen. "I will go and look into the black craters of the tops of the burning mountains Etna and Vesuvius, as they are called; I shall make them look white, which will be good for them, and for the lemons and the grapes." And away flew the Snow Queen, leaving little Sev quite alone in the great hall, which was so many miles in length. He sat and looked at his pieces of ice, and was thinking so deeply, that his thoughts crackled inside of him.

He sat so stiff and still that any one might have supposed he was frozen. In truth, he wished that he could have gone with the Snow Queen. She always could explain things so beautifully, and he found the things she did fascinating.

As the Snow Queen left her castle through a window of the highest room in the highest tower, little Lily entered the castle through the large gate.

When she came into the great entrance hall, she saw Sev, recognised him, hurled herself at him and hugged him fiercely. She cried, "Sev, sweet darling Sev, finally I've found you!"

Little Sev raised an eyebrow and looked at her sharply. "I'm no darling, and in no bloody way am I sweet. What do you want from me?"

Little Lily hugged him and wept. Sev, however, finally recognised her and saw the truth; he carried a splinter of the Mirror of Hturt inside of him, after all. He gently stroked her hair.

"There's no use crying, Lily. I'm so much happier here than I ever was at home. Why don't you stay here as well?"

Lily continued crying and couldn't believe what he said. "Everyone always did what I wanted while I was searching for you and now you don't want to go home with me, Sev? What in the world has happened to you?"

"Nothing has happened," said the Snow Queen who had returned and took Sev's hand. "He has found out what is important for him. You can't always hold on to childhood dreams, Lily. When children grow up, they must learn to make decisions and take up responsibility for the world around them. Sev wants to do that. He doesn't want to be dependent on other people any longer; he wants to help himself. This is what he can learn here. When he has learned enough, I shall show him the Mirror of Tiw Revelc, which is the grandest and best of the big magical mirrors.

"Afterwards, he can either help me with my work and be my equal, or he can look for a different occupation. The ruler of the Waters is looking for an apprentice; that would be something that would suit Sev as well.

Little Lily stared round-eyed at the Snow Queen, shook her head and wept some more. "I want Sev! I want Sev!" she cried.

Sev rolled his eyes; he found all that crying quite embarrassing. As much as he liked Lily, he preferred to live his own life.

"Why don't you stay here as well?" the Snow Queen asked kindly. "You are a dear and clever girl; you could learn many things here."

"I don't need this," Lily wailed. "People love me anyway. Sev loves me, too, don't you, Sev?"

"Always," said Sev and kissed her forehead. "But I'll stay here nonetheless. The two of us wouldn't be happy together, you know."

"But who will be my best friend, then?" asked Lily, hiccupping loudly.

"I shall always be your friend," said Sev, who felt a bit guilty. Lily had come such a long way to find him; she had gone through so much trouble for him, after all.

"But I don't want to be without you!" she yelled, but Sev shook his head.

"Didn't you meet anyone that you liked on your journey, Lily?" The Snow Queen asked agreeably.

Lily shook her head, but stopped crying. "I don't know... perhaps. Yes, I believe I did. There were the princess and her prince... and there was the little robber-boy."

The Snow Queen clapped her hands, and suddenly the reindeer cantered into the hall. James, the robber-boy, proudly rode on its back.

"It's so boring without you, Lily," said James. "Can't I stay with you? I'll never play with my knife again if you let me; I promise."

Lily looked from Sev to James and back to Sev.

"Would you go home with me?" she asked James.

"I'll go with you wherever you want to go," he replied. "I'm rich; we can go everywhere. I've inherited the robbers' treasure."

Lily looked back at Sev, but he looked at the Snow Queen. Lily sighed and finally admitted to herself that she had liked James better than Sev for quite some time now.

"Very well, then," she said to the robber-boy. "But you must do what I want." She waved at Sev and the Snow Queen, then she jumped onto the reindeer's back, and it carried Lily and James away.

"I promise you that you won't regret it, Sev," said the Snow Queen and hugged Sev tightly. "You're grown up now, and can keep your childhood love in your memories, where it belongs. Now you are free to live your own life."

"Thank you," said Sev. The Snow Queen looked at him affectionately before she fainted.

"Hermione!" Poppy cried, slapping her cheeks slightly. "Oh, Merlin, Hermione!" Hermione was lying in a heap on Snape's bed.

"If I had known what a commotion you make here, I wouldn't have woken up, Poppy."

"Severus! Oh, thank Merlin! You're back with us. But now Hermione won't wake up. Perhaps I should just let her sleep?"

Chapter 4

Summary: Hermione and Severus help Poppy with patients who don't want to wake up. This is an older story, it was written for the OWL House Cup.

Here are the links to the original fairy tales abused in part two.

The Little Match-Seller: http://hca.gilead.org.il/li_match.html

The Little Mermaid: http://hca.gilead.org.il/li_merma.html

The White Wolf: <http://sylvanawood.livejournal.com/707564.html#cutid1>

(The last one is my own rough translation since I couldn't find an English version of that fairy tale on the web.)

Fairy Tales 2: Hermione Sleeps

Chapter 4

"Perhaps you could start by telling me why Miss Granger is lying on my bed?" Severus asked, but he didn't sound angry.

Poppy started to tell him what they had done, but in the meantime, Hermione dreamed.

The Girl with the Daydream Charms

It was Christmas Eve in Hogsmeade.

The last passers-by were hurrying through the streets, quickly buying a book here, some of the delicious Honeydukes chocolate there they were last minute gifts, but just as welcome as other gifts.

A few teachers chased the last Hogwarts students out of the Three Broomsticks. As every year, a few children stayed at the school over the holidays.

The girl sat huddled in the shadows until the last passer-by had disappeared. She was very thin, her cheekbones were jutting out like over her sunken cheeks like a knife's edge, the brown, formerly lively eyes were sunken deeply into their sockets. Her face resembled nothing so much as a skull. Only the wild, bushy brown hair still seemed to be full of energy; it stuck out of her head in wild locks.

The girl dragged herself out of the shadows and shuffled over to the Three Broomsticks. Hungrily she looked through the windows and watched how the last guests were gulping down a quick dinner. Perhaps Rosmerta would give her something later? But no, no such luck tonight. Madam Rosmerta didn't want to undergo the risk and only glanced briefly at the girl, feeling slightly guilty. She locked the door and hurried away.

The girl followed her with her eyes, looking very sad. She shivered. The thin cloak couldn't provide much warmth on that cold day. And of course an outcast Muggle-born witch wasn't allowed to use a wand. She couldn't even cast a warming charm upon herself.

That only left her the option to freeze and starve. Her last meal had been two days ago.

Initially, she had wanted to sell some Daydream Charms from the WWW. Someone who was looking for a last minute gift might be willing to purchase banned objects and see the charms as collector's items. Perhaps...

At the moment, things didn't look very promising, however.

The girl who was once known as Hermione Granger had lost all hope. It wasn't funny to be interrogated by the Death Eater police. She had experienced these interrogations several times already. No one seemed to want to take a risk on Christmas Eve; everyone was hurrying past her; only sometimes someone cast a pitying glance towards her.

Hermione was desperate. What could she do? She didn't have any money or food, and the Death Eater police had destroyed her last shelter only yesterday. She would have to sleep on the street again.

Tiredly, she shuffled along until she came to a doorway that looked as if it could provide some shelter from the wind and the snow.

She huddled down in a corner and put her bundle with the daydream charms at her side. Today, no one would want to buy any, and tomorrow it was too late for Christmas gifts anyway.

A beautiful dream... How lovely it would be to dream again, thought Hermione. Should she risk it? Just this once?

With trembling fingers, she ripped one of the boxes open. The package showed a Christmas tree and Hermione let the charm wash over her.

Suddenly she stood in the living room of her parents' house. The Christmas tree stood besides the door to the garden, and her parents beamed at her.

"Good morning, darling," her mother said. "Come, look at your presents."

Hermione clapped her hands and hugged her father and mother. Then she knelt in front of her presents to carefully unwrap one after the other. It was wonderfully warm in the room, and it smelled of cookies and ginger bread, but all of a sudden, all the windows opened and a cold wind made Hermione shiver.

The frightened look on the faces of her parents was the last thing Hermione saw of them, before she became aware of her surroundings. A gust of wind had thrown some snow into the doorway and ripped Hermione out of her daydream. Hermione wept; her parents had looked so alive. In reality, they had been dead a year, murdered by Death Eaters. Oh, if only she could see them one last time!

Hermione wiped her tears off with her sleeve and opened another box of the daydream charms.

Again, she stood in a room with a richly decorated Christmas tree besides a window. However, she wasn't in the house of her parents but in the Burrow.

All the Weasleys were sitting around the large dinner table in the kitchen, and Harry was there as well.

"Hermione!" Mrs. Weasley cried. "Do come in, sit down and eat with us."

Hermione didn't need to be told twice and after she'd hugged Harry, Ron and Ginny, she dug in. They had glazed ham, mashed potatoes, peas and carrots, and mashed parsnips. Afterwards, everyone got a piece of plum pudding.

Hermione was about to pour herself a cup of tea when the twins started to throw snow at her.

"Hey, you two," cried Hermione, "stop that...." But at the same moment it went dark and a strong gust of wind tossed another handful of snow into Hermione's face.

"Oh no," she cried. "That was far too short..." She couldn't suppress the tears that were streaming down her cheeks any longer. Not one of the Weasleys had survived the war. The whole family had been extinguished; the Burrow had been destroyed and no one talked about them any more; no one dared to remember... And Harry, her brave, determined best friend was gone, dead, slain in the duel with Voldemort.

Hermione didn't quite know how she, herself, had survived, and she didn't know how she could go on living. Each and every one of the people she'd loved even Crookshanks, her cat were dead, murdered by Death Eaters.

Hermione was sobbing so hard that she got a hiccup. If only the dream had lasted a bit longer... It said on the box that a daydream charm would last for an hour, but it looked like this was only true if you weren't bombarded with snow during that time.

Hermione couldn't stand it any longer. She wanted to see her loved ones once again, to hug them, to feel their warmth. Determinedly, she ripped open all the remaining boxes with daydream charms.

Her hands were stiff from the cold and she could only open the boxes with difficulty and barely managed to activate the charms, but with a lot of patience and perseverance she finally succeeded, and all of a sudden, she didn't feel the icy cold any longer.

Hermione stood at the entrance to the Great Hall at Hogwarts. A long row of Christmas trees stood lined up at one wall. Candles floated in the air and all her teachers sat at the head table.

Professor McGonagall gave her a friendly wave, and the Professors Sprout and Flitwick smiled and nodded at her. Professor Dumbledore walked towards her, hands stretched out in her direction.

"Come, child," he said. "This is where you belong; this is your home."

Hermione took his hands in hers, happy that all her teachers whom she had believed to be dead were now sitting here together and being merry. She smiled back, but noticed that someone was missing. One of the teachers was missing. Confused, she looked around.

"I am here, Miss Granger," a soft, deep, velvety voice said. Hermione turned her head, and there he stood and looked at her with his piercing, black eyes.

"Professor Snape," she exclaimed happily. "You're alive!"

Snape put an arm around her shoulder Hermione didn't find that odd at all and said, "Yes, I live, and you should too."

Hermione looked at her former teacher and became lost in the gaze from his glittering, black eyes. Everything started to spin around her and she felt faint. Then she lost consciousness.

The people who passed by the doorway on Christmas morning cast a pitying glance at the unmoving bundle in the corner.

"She froze to death; she must have tried to find some comfort in the charms," they said. But before anyone could inform the police so they could remove the body, a man in a long black Death Eater cloak with a silver mask came to the doorway and picked the girl up into his arms. Walking swiftly, he went away.

"Severus, Severus, wake up! Are you all right? Merlin! Don't let him fall into a coma again... Severus!"

Poppy Pomfrey lightly slapped Severus' cheeks until he opened his eyes.

"Leave me be; I am all right. Just tired. Is there improvement?"

"At first she trembled horribly, but after you entered her mind, she became calmer. From time to time, her eyes watered, but I don't know if she cried or if her eyes had been irritated by something."

"She was crying. She had a nightmare. I don't know for how long she was in that dream; you didn't let me follow right away, after all, but from what I've gathered, she believed that the war had been lost and that her family and friends had all been murdered. I found her when she dreamed she was celebrating Christmas in the Great Hall at Hogwarts. From there, I could manipulate her dream."

"And now you'll understand why I had to give you a brief summary about what has happened in the last two years. Otherwise, you'd not have been able to help her."

"That's your opinion," Snape snapped. "Speak for yourself. In any case, I wasn't very successful. I'll have to try again."

"First you'll get some rest," Poppy said firmly. "If you think that I will stand here and watch as the two of you dream each other from one coma into the next, then think again. And if I have to secure you with a full body bind, you will first eat something, and then you'll get some rest."

Chapter 5

Summary: Hermione and Severus help Poppy with patients who don't want to wake up. This is an older story, it was written for the OWL House Cup.

###Here are the links to the original fairy tales abused in part two.###

The Little Match-Seller: http://hca.gilead.org.il/li_match.html

The Little Mermaid: http://hca.gilead.org.il/li_merma.html

The White Wolf: http://sylvanawood.livejournal.com/*707564.html#cutid1

(The last one is my own rough translation since I couldn't find an English version of that fairy tale on the web.)

Fairy Tales 2: Hermione Sleeps

Chapter 5

"You can be glad that you've recovered so well, after such a short time."

"You call two years a short time? Not very accurate, if you ask me," Snape sneered.

"Spare me your sarcasm, Severus. That won't affect me. You will do what I ask of you, otherwise you don't need to show up here any more. If you want to help Hermione, then you'll listen to me. Otherwise, I'll ask someone else."

"And whom will you ask? You need someone who is skilled at Legilimency. This is an obscure art that isn't widespread, even among Healers."

"I can always ask Draco Malfoy. He and his family are in Hermione's debt."

"Ever since Hermione was tortured in Malfoy Manor, Draco has felt he owes her something. He would gladly try to help her; he has changed considerably, Severus. You can be proud of him."

Snape glanced at Poppy with a thoughtful expression. "Granger was tortured? I didn't know that."

"Lestrangle did it. You know how she was."

"Yes," Snape said simply and looked at the sleeping Hermione. Poppy thought that she had never before seen so much compassion in his eyes. But she also knew that any comment on that would only provoke him into fierce antagonism, therefore she was silent.

"I shall do as you wish, Poppy. Then I'll try again to help her. I owe her that."

"I'm sure she would see that differently, but I am glad that you'll do it, Severus. Draco is a Legilimens, but you are the more experienced, by far."

Snape nodded and went back to his own bed.

Three days later, he felt strong enough to try again. After Poppy had explained to him in detail what Hermione had tried to do to wake him up, he decided to gradually prolong the times he was spending in her mind. Before he would go in, he'd take a strengthening potion to prevent him from getting too weak to wake up again. The manipulation of dreams seemed to cause a huge drain of magical energies, thus he wanted to be as well prepared as could be.

In the meantime, Hermione found herself in a very odd environment.

The Little Mermaid and The Prince With the Big Nose

Hermione was no longer a witch; she was a princess. However, her parents weren't the rulers of just any odd kingdom, they were the rulers of the merpeople who lived deep down on the bottom of the sea.

To be precise, her father was the ruler; her mother had died already. But Hermione now had a grandmother and five sisters. She lived happily as a mermaid in her father's palace.

The merpeople in the ocean were remotely related to the merpeople who lived in the Black Lake at Hogwarts, but the two peoples didn't have very much in common.

Hermione's people lived very comfortably, surrounded by all the riches the ocean could provide. The merpeople were proud and beautiful, and the most beautiful of them all was Hermione.

In general, life under water was rather similar to life on land, even if there were a few differences.

On the bottom of the sea, there were grass, trees and flowers. The branches of the trees swayed in the waves just as the branches of land trees sway in the wind.

The water was clear and blue. High above the sun shone like a red flower. From time to time, the sun was clouded over when either whales or the ships of the landpeople were passing by.

There weren't any birds under water, but many fish in brilliant colours, big and small, were swimming about merrily, and sometimes they swam through the windows into the palace and let the princesses feed them.

Hermione and her sisters loved flowers and gardens, and each of them had an area in the palace gardens where they could do what they wanted.

Her sisters planted the most beautiful and magnificent flowers, but Hermione wasn't content with just flowers; she wanted to have something different. She had always been different from her sisters; she was a quiet, thoughtful child who liked to read and think.

One day Hermione found the marble statue of a boy. It had fallen to the bottom of the ocean from a shipwreck. Everything that had been in this ship had rained down on the merpeople. This usually happened with all the shipwrecks. The sailors, however, only arrived dead, because the landpeople weren't able to breathe under water.

Hermione loved the marble statue. She never tired looking at it. She positioned it under a tree in her garden and often sat there thinking about the landpeople. She had read what she could find about them and even asked her proud grandmother about them.

"The landpeople aren't like us," the grandmother told her. "They are ugly. Instead of our lovely fishtail, they have two stumps which they call legs. They cannot breathe under water and don't live as long as we do. You shouldn't be thinking about them so much, child."

But Hermione couldn't stop thinking about the landpeople. When she looked up at the sun, she was full of longing.

The princesses were only allowed to swim up to the surface once they had reached their fifteenth years.

When the first of the sisters turned fifteen, the sisters decided to tell each other what they had liked the most in the world outside the water.

For Hermione it was very difficult to wait, since she was the youngest of the sisters.

The years passed, and Hermione's sisters told her about the world above. They told her how loud the sounds were ringing through the air, how colourful and majestic the fireworks sparkled in the night sky, how the stars glittered, how bright the sun was shining, how very beautiful a sunset was, how merrily the children played on the shore and how anxious the sailors were on their ships during a storm.

Hermione soaked these stories up, and finally, finally, the day had come: It was the day of her fifteenth birthday.

She could hardly wait to get to the surface. After the first few excursions, her sisters had lost interest and found life on the bottom of the sea much better than that on dry land.

Now, however, Hermione was allowed swim up by herself, and with a wildly hammering heart she went on her way.

When she finally reached the surface, she curiously looked around. She saw the blue sky, and how bright the sun really was. She saw a resplendent city on the shore, and the proud ships in the harbour. There seemed to be festivities on one of the ships, it was richly decorated, full of elegantly dressed people and music was ringing out of its cabins.

I shall take a closer look, Hermione thought and swam closer to the ship. She hid her head behind the white crests of the waves; the sea had become rough that night. When she had come close enough, she looked through a window and saw a merry party. In the centre stood a young man with beautiful intelligent black eyes, black hair and a very big nose. The sight of this man made Hermione's heart beat faster, but she couldn't explain why he had that effect on her.

The man was a prince, at least the others called him that. Hermione couldn't stop looking at him.

Eventually she had to turn away and dive for a bit. The sea had become so rough that she couldn't merely drift at the ship's side any longer. She enjoyed the rough sea, and when she came to the surface again, she watched with interest how the landpeople on the ship fought the storm.

Hermione swam at the rolling ship's side and wondered if it would sink. She didn't have to wonder for long, since there was a horrible cracking sound and then the masts, and finally the hull, broke. The landpeople screamed and fell into the water.

How lovely, Hermione thought. Now they can visit us. But no! The landpeople weren't able to breathe under water and they surely would die.

The Prince! Where was the prince? Hermione panicked. She didn't want to see the man die who had touched her heart in such a strange way. Quickly she dove under the surface, swam through the debris and looked for the prince.

There! Was this seaweed or was this his long, black hair? When she came closer, she saw that it was indeed the prince. He had his eyes closed and was unconscious. Hermione carefully supported his head and brought him to the surface where he breathed in, coughing loudly. For a brief moment, he opened his eyes and looked at her.

It wasn't easy for Hermione to pull the prince's heavy body behind her and keep his head above the water at the same time. After a lot of heaving and pulling, she finally succeeded to get the unconscious prince to the shore.

She laid him down on the soft sand at the shore of an estuary, but she couldn't get him very far onto the beach since she couldn't walk with her fish tail.

What should she do now? The prince was saved, but there was no one in sight who could take care of him. Hermione decided to swim upriver and look for other landpeople.

After some time, she found a house with a beautiful garden close to the river. Hermione decided to take the prince there. She placed him under a weeping willow with branches that almost touched the water. She swam a few feet away from the shore and hid behind a stone. She wanted to be certain that the prince would be found.

Hermione didn't have to wait for very long before a young girl came out of the house and found the prince. She was very beautiful, her long, red hair lay across her shoulders like a cloak, and the green eyes were shining brightly out of her pale face.

When the girl saw the prince, she ran over to him. After taking a close look, she called for help. The prince opened his eyes, looked around in confusion and asked, "Did you save me?"

Hermione had seen enough, she knew that the prince was safe now, she had to go back to her family on the bottom of the sea. After all, she couldn't possibly tell the prince that it had been her who had saved him. He might just as well believe that it had been the beautiful red-haired girl.

After Hermione arrived back home, she was even quieter than before. She longed for the prince with the black eyes who had moved something in her heart that she couldn't explain.

From time to time she swam to the surface and then she always tried to catch a glimpse of the prince, who often stood on the shore and stared out at the sea with a thoughtful expression.

Over time, Hermione became sadder and sadder. She couldn't forget the prince; she would have done anything to be with him on dry land. But that was impossible. She would have to give up her life as a mermaid and would lose everything.

Her sisters and her grandmother wanted to cheer Hermione up. They prepared a magnificent ball in Hermione's honour. Hermione danced and sang no one had such a lovely voice as she had but she couldn't really enjoy herself.

At last, when everyone else was celebrating merrily, Hermione summoned her courage and stealthily left the palace. She never looked back and hurried to the coral forest where a powerful witch resided.

"I can help you," said the witch, "but nothing is free. I will have to brew a potion for you - a potion that needs to contain a bit of my own blood. In return, I want your voice as payment. When you drink the potion, you'll lose your fishtail and be able to walk on land. Your gait will be light and elegant as that of a fairy. However, every step you take will be filled with pain, just as if someone forced sharp blades into your legs.

Only a man of the landpeople who loves you truly and deeply can take this pain away from you. Only then can you become one of them. Are you prepared to pay the price?

"Anything, I'll do anything," Hermione said.

"Very well," said the witch and brewed the potion. Then she cut Hermione's tongue out so Hermione could neither sing nor speak any longer.

Crying, because she didn't know how she now could tell the prince that she loved him, Hermione slowly swam to the surface, sat down on a stone on the shore and drank the potion.

Pain stabbed through her body as if she were hacked into pieces by swords. Her fishtail fell off and in its stead she now had two slim beautiful legs.

She was shivering from the pain as she dragged herself onto the shore, however her steps were light and graceful, just as promised.

Exhausted, she sat in the sand and fell asleep. When she woke up, she looked right into the black eyes of the prince.

"You are the one who rescued me, not the red-haired girl. For this, I'll always love you the most." And he kissed her. Hermione closed her eyes and returned the kiss. When she opened her eyes again, she looked into the bottomless eyes of Severus Snape.

"Do you really love me?" she asked, but before he could reply, she lost consciousness again.

Severus softly pushed a strand of hair from her face, sighed and sat up.

"What was that all about?" Poppy asked curiously.

"I almost had her," he said. "She was awake. But it wasn't enough. I'll have to enter her dreams once again.

"Were you able to change anything?"

"She knows the same Muggle fairy tales I know; after all, we both grew up among Muggles. In this last dream, I was able to change the outcome. That freed a big part of her mind. For a moment, she was fully awake, and I think we'll have her back very soon." He scowled horribly. "And if you tell someone that I said this, I shall hex you, Poppy."

Poppy Pomfrey laughed. "Don't worry, Severus, I'll be so happy to have both of you back sound and sane, that I'll keep all your secrets as if they were my own. You don't need to hide that you're glad to see Hermione getting better. She was so sad when she couldn't help you. I'd almost say that she was heartbroken, but that is hardly possible, is it, when you were both asleep?

Snape thoughtfully looked back at Poppy. "We've spent a lot of time together, even if it was only in these wild dreams. I, ah, don't find Miss Granger quite as insufferable as I used to."

"That's good," said Poppy but thought to herself that these words, from the lips of Severus Snape, could be considered to be a proclamation of love.

"I shall sleep for a few hours, and then I'll try once more," said Snape and stood up from his chair. "When are you free?"

"This evening should be fine. You have almost the whole day to get some rest. I can see that you feel much better; you're not so pale any more, and you look more relaxed. I think that several hours of sleep and a good meal should be enough.

"Then I'll see you later," Snape said and went to his room.

Chapter 6

Chapter 6 of 6

Summary: Hermione and Severus help Poppy with patients who don't want to wake up. This is an older story, it was written for the OWL House Cup.

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The Little Match-Seller: http://hca.gilead.org.il/li_match.html

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The White Wolf: <http://sylvanawood.livejournal.com/707564.html#cutid1>

(The last one is my own rough translation since I couldn't find an English version of that fairy tale on the web.)

Fairy Tales 2: Hermione Sleeps

Chapter 6

In the evening, Severus sat down at Hermione's bedside, took her hand, cast his spell and once again entered her mind.

The Clever Witch and The White Wolf

Harry Potter, who had just become Minister of Magic, went out for a hunting trip in the Forbidden Forest in order to relax after his stressful election campaign. Hagrid had told him where the Acromantulas and the centaurs roamed; these parts of the forest were best avoided, but the Forbidden Forest was big enough; there was plenty of game to be found elsewhere.

Harry had just driven a flock of pheasants out of hiding when his broom started to cause trouble. It bucked wildly and threw him off. Harry lost his wand and found himself disoriented in the middle of the Forbidden Forest. He had neither a wand nor a broom.

Harry was wandering around, day and night; he had become very hungry, but he couldn't find his way back.

Without a wand, he couldn't even send his Patronus for help. He could only hope that his friends would soon come looking for him.

No one seemed to miss him, though. Everyone knew that he wanted to relax while hunting, and the hero who had vanquished Voldemort would hardly encounter anything too dangerous during a hunting trip.

Harry had become desperate when he finally encountered a small black man with a big nose. Harry hailed the little man politely and asked for the way.

"I shall show you the way and accompany you, but you must give me something in return."

"You must give me the first creature coming out of your house to greet you."

Harry felt relieved and said, "That's very friendly and generous of you. Normally, the first coming out to greet me is my faithful dog, and I shall gladly give him to you. I know that you'll take good care of him."

But the little man replied, "I do not want your faithful dog, something else I much prefer."

When they left the forest, the little man side-along Apparated with Harry to Grimmauld Place. His best friend Hermione saw him from a window and ran out to greet him. As he hugged her, he said, "I really would have preferred if my dog would have greeted me first."

"What? You'd rather greet your dog than me? Don't let Ginny hear that, she'll hex you," Hermione replied, feeling more than a bit indignant.

Harry smiled sadly and said, "I didn't mean it quite that way." And he told her everything.

Hermione was determined. "If that is how it is, then I shall go with the little man. That's better than having lost you in the forest, Harry. I'll see what he wants. Don't worry; I can take care of myself."

Harry really wasn't all that concerned. He knew that his friend Hermione was a clever and powerful witch. She had dealt with more dangerous foes in the past.

"All right, then, but if you need help, I still have your coin with the Protean Charm, Hermione."

Hermione hugged Harry again and then went to the little man to ask him what he wanted from her.

The man said, "I'll come and get you a week from now."

A week later, a white wolf came to Grimmauld Place, and Hermione had to sit on its back. The wolf ran so fast that it made her breathless. It ran uphill, downhill, through bushes, past fields, through forests, and finally Hermione couldn't stand it any longer and asked, "Are we there yet?"

"Silence! Far, far do we have to go until we reach the glass mountain, and if you're not silent, I shall throw you off."

They moved on until poor Hermione despaired and complained, and asked, "Are we there yet?"

The wolf replied in just the same threatening manner as before and ran on, on and on, until she gathered her courage and asked for the third time, "Are we there yet?" Immediately, the wolf threw her off its back and ran away.

When Hermione wanted to take her wand out of her pocket, she realised that she had lost it. Either she had lost it during that wild ride or when she fell from the wolf's back. Now she was all alone in the middle of nowhere. She walked for a long time and thought to herself that she surely would find other people eventually.

And really, she arrived at a cabin, where a small fire was burning. An old gammer was sitting there and had a pot on the fire.

Hermione asked, "My good woman, did you, by any chance, happen to see the white wolf?"

"No, you had better ask the wind; he asks around everywhere. But stay for a while; eat with me. I'm cooking chicken soup here."

Hermione accepted the invitation because she was hungry and didn't want to appear ungrateful. When she had finished eating, the old woman said, "Here, take the chicken bones with you; you may yet find a use for them." The gammer showed her which way to go to find the wind.

When Hermione arrived at the wind's house, she found him sitting at a fire and cooking chicken soup. But when she asked about the white wolf, all he could reply was, "Dear child, I haven't seen it. I stayed at home today, to get a bit of well-deserved rest. Ask the sun; she rises and sets every day, but follow my lead and get some rest. Eat with me, and afterwards you can take all the chicken bones with you; you may yet find a use for them."

After all this had been done, Hermione went to visit the sun. When she arrived there, she got the same reply as she had received from the wind.

The sun was cooking chicken soup on her own fire, and she hadn't seen the white wolf either. She invited Hermione to share her meal, though. "Go and ask the moon, because the white wolf would most likely run at night, and that's when the moon sees everything."

When Hermione had finished her meal and collected the chicken bones, she walked on and asked the moon. He too was cooking chicken soup and said, "Pity. I wasn't shining last night, or rose too late today; I don't know anything about the white wolf."

That made Hermione cry, and she exclaimed, "Oh Merlin, whom can I ask now?"

"Patience, my dear," said the moon. "You are tired and hungry; come, sit down and eat chicken soup with me, and take the chicken bones with you; you will find a use for them yet. Oh, I know some news after all. In the glass mountain it's the wedding day of the little black man. The man in the moon is invited, too."

"Oh, the glass mountain, the glass mountain! That's where I wanted to go; that's where the white wolf should have carried me," cried Hermione.

"I can shine to guide you on your way," the moon said. "There are many glass mountains. You could easily lose your way. Why, I consist entirely of glass mountains myself!"

"But first take all the chicken bones."

"Hermione did as she was told but in her hurry she left one of the bones behind."

Soon she stood at the foot of the glass mountain, but the mountain was smooth and slippery; there was no way up. Hermione took all the chicken bones: the bones the gammer had given her, the ones from the wind, from the sun, and the moon, and made a long ladder for her to climb up. Alas! In the end, one rung was missing. Resolutely, Hermione cut off the upper joint of her little finger, and the ladder was complete, and now she could quickly climb up to the top of the glass mountain.

On the top of the mountain she found a wide opening with a grandiose staircase that led into the mountain itself, and downwards. Inside, everything was glittering and shimmering impressively. A big hall was filled with guests, a group of musicians played dance music, and tables were overflowing with extravagant dishes.

The little black man with the big nose sat at one end of the table and there a lady was sitting at his side. She had red hair and green eyes and was his bride. The little man, however, looked inconsolably sad.

As Hermione saw him like this, her heart ached. She was very sorry that she had come so late.

She couldn't bear to see the man looking so sad. She didn't want him to marry the red headed lady. She knew that he didn't really love the red headed lady. Hermione had realized that both she and the little man could only ever be happy if they married each other.

Well, Hermione thought, perhaps it would help if I sang a song about the white wolf. With a little luck, he'll recognize me.

She looked around for something to help her and saw a piano at a wall. During her childhood she'd had piano lessons, and so she sat down and started to play and sing.

"I do not want your faithful dog,

something else I much prefer.

Clever Hermione.

"The white wolf, he ran away.

She didn't know where it went.

Clever Hermione."

When he heard her sing, the little man raised his head and looked at her with his black, bottomless eyes, but Hermione continued to play and sing.

"She followed where the wolf had gone,

cut off her finger's joint.

Clever Hermione.

"Now she is here but you don't know her,

Sadly she sings this song

Clever Hermione."

The little black man jumped off his chair and, with a loud and resounding big bang, he transformed into a powerful wizard.

The wizard was Severus Snape. He hurried towards her and took her in his arms.

"Your love for me caused you to endure all this, Hermione. For love of me, you've sacrificed so much that you've even given a piece of yourself. You have released me and you've released yourself too. Come back with me back to life, and if you want it, my heart will be yours forever."

Amazed, Hermione looked into Severus Snape's eyes. She had never heard him speak in such a friendly manner to anyone, least of all to herself.

She swallowed, nodded, and followed him, eyes closed as in a dream.

When she opened her eyes, she once again gazed into the black eyes of Severus Snape.

"Do you really love me?" she asked in wonderment. He was sitting on her bed, bent over her, and had woven his fingers through hers.

"As unbelievable as this may sound, it is true," he said and kissed her fingers.

"That makes me very happy," Hermione whispered and pulled his head towards her with her free hand, and then she kissed his lips.

Much to the surprise of the wizarding world, Hermione and Severus got married a year later.

And they lived happily ever after.

The End

A/N: This last one always has been my favourite fairy tale and I had great fun adapting it to Hermione and Severus. I always preferred a princess rescuing the prince, rather than the other way around.