

# A Single Tear

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Dreams can haunt us.

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*Chapter 1 of 1*

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This story was written for the 2015 LJ sshg\_prompfest. Thank you, Hikori Chan, for the beta work.

**Prompt:** Hermione dreams about the night Severus received the Dark Mark.

**Note:** This story, as the prompt states, is about dreams. All italicized passages are dream sequences. They may seem disjointed and may not make much sense. Hermione dreams just as we do ... never in a straight line. This story is SS & HG, but there is no romance involved. It begins at the final battle and facts remain the same. Snape dies, Hermione lives. If you are looking for romance, please move along. You won't find it here.

It had been impetuous and foolish in hindsight.

For all the care taken while on the run, it was in the final hours that Hermione made her mistake. A mistake she would have to live with for the rest of her life.

Unlike a curse or wound which could most likely be cured by a potion or Healer's touch, this mistake was one she had to learn to deal with and accept a damage that would only be erased upon her eventual death.

~~~SSHG~~~

Harry, Ron and Hermione found themselves in Hogsmeade frantically searching for a way to avoid the Snatchers seeking them. The shriek of the curfew siren brought panic and confusion to their actions. In their haste to reach the open door and the beckoning arm of Dumbledore's doppelganger, Hermione grasped the corner of a building to prevent a slip. Her adrenaline blocked the pain as she cut her finger on a sharp iron hinge. She didn't notice the gash. It was no more than a bad parchment cut yet it was deep enough to bring several drops of blood.

~~~SSHG~~~

Hermione's heart thumped as she frantically passed Harry the vial. When Snape said "Take them" she guessed what was happening. She was familiar with the theory of viewing memories but lacked Harry's practical experience.

As Harry stood to leave the Shack, Hermione quickly knelt next to Snape. No one deserved to die like this, even this man who had tormented them so. He drew his last breath. Hermione reached to close his open eyes. With her cleanest finger she quickly wiped one dark tear from his still face.

~~~SSHG~~~

After the dust had settled, Hermione moved into Ron's room at The Burrow. Molly had been judgmental, but Ron uncharacteristically stood up to her. He reminded his mother that he and Hermione had experienced things that overshadowed any propriety on her behalf. There wasn't much protest from Molly after that.

The trauma of war and the death of loved ones dampened their physical relationship. Instead of consummating their love, they held each other close and shed tears each night. Both turned to Dreamless Sleep for that first week and ignored the threat of addiction.

It didn't take long for Hermione to decide her love for Ron was far too familial and far less physical than she preferred. Ron seemed to feel the same way, so after a month, Hermione moved out of The Burrow into a flat of her own.

~~~SSHG~~~

Sometime in August it happened for the first time. It happened so subtly, she didn't even realize she should be concerned.

After a busy day of cleaning, shopping, and then walking the neighborhood, Hermione turned in early for a restful night. She lay on her side and Crookshanks curled up to her belly. She grabbed him and held him as close as a security blanket.

As she drifted to sleep, her mind began to explore the edges of dreams.

*The warmth and comfort of Crookshanks felt very good as she dozed in her comfortable bed. The feeling of independence in her apartment was nice, she just wished her father would quit ranting and raving in the sitting room. At least she was shut away on her cot. The wand she clutched closely to her chest was her security blanket it would be used to protect her if necessary, or at least scare the old man. Cold. The threadbare sheet wasn't enough. Tomorrow she could find new linens and Crookshanks would help.*

Her dreams drifted off in other directions, yet the next day, Hermione felt somewhat unsettled trying to remember what didn't seem right about them.

~~~SSHG~~~

Off and on over the next few weeks, Hermione would experience strange snippets of dreams that seemed foreign to her. One night had her running through the Forbidden Forest, her long legs carrying her past the threat of the taunts hurled at her by voices on the periphery. Another night, she was sitting on a neglected park swing, smoking a fag and finding herself angry at the world in general. She started to realize something wasn't right when she dreamed of the silver and green tapestries in the Slytherin Common Room; a place she had never been, but could envision clearly.

Sometime in October, she figured out what was happening. That night her dreams took a more definitive turn.

*Hermione took her place next to Neville in class. Professor Snape was his usual self, billowing and sneering as he marched through the class to the front, delivering the assignment on the board with a wave of his wand. Draught of Living Death shouldn't this be Slughorn's class? No matter. She felt confident that the Felix Felicis would be hers. She had already experimented with this potion several times and knew the tricks that would perfect it. Her copy of Advanced Potion Making lay open in front of her and she double-checked her own hand written notes. Crush, not cut. That was the trick.*

Hermione bolted awake and sat straight up in terror. *Breathe, Hermione* she told herself. She replayed the dream and recognized it was much too vivid and detailed to be hers. The book in the dreams was the Half-Blood Prince's book, but instead of belonging to Harry, it was hers. She was Snape in the dream. Why was she Snape in her dreams?

~~~SSHG~~~

Over the next few months, Hermione did what she did best. She took detailed notes and she researched. She investigated magical dream theory and soul transference as well as any other obtuse philosophy that might explain why she saw the world through Snape's eyes in her dreams. She debated whether or not she had been, as Muggles would say, possessed. That didn't seem logical. She didn't assume any of his character whilst awake, only while dreaming.

It took the better part of a year, but Hermione finally recognized something about the dreams that was blatantly obvious: all of the dreams were about events that took place in the past. They were memories.

That last, lone tear. Damn.

~~~SSHG~~~

Once Hermione realized what happened, she dealt better with the situation. At first she feared for her mental and psychological state, but once she realized she was a living Pensieve, per se, she knew she could adjust to whatever existential crisis might present itself in her dreams.

Quite often she enjoyed the adventures she experienced whilst sleeping. There was something thrilling about riding a broom without fear, developing a potion to cure thestral cough that was worthy of a patent, and feeling the surge of power flow through her (his) wand as Sectumsempra was finally perfected.

Many other times Hermione woke with tears in her eyes. No one knew the anguished life of Severus Snape as she did now. She relived the betrayal of his own words as he called Lily "Mudblood"; his heartbreak when he was not only ostracized by the purebloods of his house, but tormented daily by the Murders, never finding peace or shelter. The dysfunction of his family home was a fate no innocent child should ever endure.

~~~SSHG~~~

A year after the battle, Hermione still determinedly kept her notes regarding the dreams. She had come to accept them, and she was determined to one day write a biography of the dead man who had become her constant companion.

One fateful night an inebriated Hermione fell into her bed. She had been out late celebrating the Patil twins' birthday with a group of their friends. The drunken stupor might have been the catalyst for the dream that came to haunt her.

As she drifted off in her cozy bed, her last conscious thought was her excitement as she entered into the pub and saw the old housemates she had not seen in a year and had not caught up with for an even longer time.

*Parvati had outdone herself with the party venue. This was the most elegant pub she had ever been in. The parquet floors shined with the sweat of a thousand house-elves. "And what gift do you offer tonight, Severus?" I had to kneel, or course, and as I did so I replied, "My eternal servitude, Padma." She was so beautiful. She was a tall woman with a commanding presence, possessing the charisma to lead legions into battle for any cause.*

*"And what gift do you wish from me, in exchange for your servitude, Severus?"*

*"Only the ability to eat death for your glory, my Lord."*

*"Lucius, Antonin, take your places beside your brother." Two Death Eaters knelt to either side of me. Lucius was to my left he held my left arm straight and with a silver blade, cut the fabric of my robes and shirt from elbow to hand, exposing the tender flesh of my inner arm. Antonin knelt to my right and conjured a braid of hemp. He thrust the dry bundle between my teeth and hissed, "Bite down, brother. It will help."*

*Padma Riddle stepped closer and drew her/his wand. Its tip traced the length of my exposed arm, making every small hair stand up on end. Words were hissed in the language of snakes and searing flame forged into my veins. My skin was sizzling and spitting, and the pain almost pushed me to unconsciousness, but as my world began*

*to turn black, a cool breeze blew in and soothed me, comforted me, and caressed my cock with its succor. My penis swelled under its breath and pulsed with the tightening constriction of the wind. The storm grew and its tempestuous arms encircled my head, my torso, my legs, and betwixt my thighs. Fucking the wind, my hips thrust forward rhythmically, attempting to find purchase in the maelstrom. When it felt as though I could not bear my cosmic lover another moment, she reached to me like a bolt of lightning at my exposed wrist and sealed her lust within me. I could feel my orgasm take me and gasped for breath.*

The throbbing of her orgasmic dream brought Hermione awake. She felt nauseous, disturbed that the dream aroused her so. It was terrible and frightening how Voldemort could convince his followers to accept the Dark Mark with a few choice words. It was disgusting how he had combined physical pain and pleasure into the tattoo, forever chasing its owner with sensation. To know that Snape lived with the mark and how it must have affected him, fucked up his mind, made Hermione ill.

She didn't want to fall back asleep. This was too much. Hermione padded into the kitchen, carrying her notebook and quill. The kettle started to warm as Hermione brought a chair to the counter. She climbed onto it and then opened the uppermost cabinet. She pushed the pots and casserole dishes aside, then reached to the far corner and brought out what she now feared most.

Dreamless Sleep.

**Fin.**