

Slipped Away

by Shanastay

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Chapter 1 of 1

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AN: The long-ago-promised fic has arrived by *your* request! This is a companion piece to my one-shot *My Happy Ending*. I strongly recommend reading that first, as this one will then make SO much more sense. ([Read My Happy Ending here.](#)) This one-shot takes up Snape's perspective immediately following the events of *My Happy Ending*.

My Happy Ending has been nominated for Best Infidelity & Break-up at *The Sorting Hat: Harry Potter Thematic Fanfiction Awards*. ([See all the nominees here.](#))

Slipped Away song lyrics by Avril Lavigne.

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Nah, nah la la la nah nah

I miss you,

Miss you so bad

Severus knelt on the sodden, muddy ground surrounding the White Tomb of the last man he had truly been able to call friend, his face hidden by his long-fingered hands. The Potions master was heedless of the muck seeping into and defiling his normally pristine robes as his thin frame trembled from the force of the repressed emotions coursing through it.

I did it. She's gone. I did it.

Snape dropped his hands to his sides, face turning up toward the dark clouds that opened to loose a downpour on the suddenly very small man. A howl born of pure misery erupted from his lips as the heavens answered with a bone-shaking crash of thunder. Anyone observing the spectacle would have wondered if the distraught wizard was feeding off the sudden storm's energy, or if he had actually caused the unusual weather.

I don't forget you,

Oh, it's so sad

Damn you to Hades for all eternity, Potter!

Rain mixed with tears until one couldn't tell what was which. "HERMIONE!!!" Over and over he screamed, until his throat was incapable of any sound.

I hope you can hear me

I remember it clearly

Bloodshot and revealing a shattered soul, Severus' eyes stared unblinkingly at the monument that held his late mentor's broken body. *Oh, Merlin. Albus, what have I done?*

It had taken every bit of willpower he possessed to follow through with The-Boy-Come-Bastard-Who-Lived-To-Learn-To-Hate's plan. Goddess, but she had been glorious in her rage, looking every inch the lioness. He had almost faltered then. Almost.

The day

You slipped away

Was the day

I found it won't be the same

Ooooh

He had closed his eyes for the briefest second as she slapped the offending article down on the table before him.

"Care to explain this?"

So it begins. Potter has set the Snitch in motion.

He could literally feel his heart breaking as it truly sank in, what he was about to do. He was to drive away and virtually destroy the one person he'd come to care for more than his own life. He'd be destroying himself in the process. But that was likely Potter's intention from the get-go.

"No."

He didn't recognize his own voice as he dismissed her with nary a glance at the source of her ire. He'd known she'd be direct in her search for answers. But then again, The Prat knew that as well. She'd try to find out what had happened before she totally lost it and gave in to the rage sure to be simmering just below the surface.

"Severus! This is *our* work, *our* theories. How could you publish this without my input and actually have *her* name on it?"

Her. Kathleen Frejne, the tall, blonde, American ex-Auror who seemed to be Hermione's one true insecurity. Saying that the brunette despised Kathleen was a gross understatement of epic proportions. Merely mentioning the woman's name was guaranteed to send Severus' wife into an insecure snit. The fact that the feeling was apparently mutual on Frejne's part didn't help matters.

Nah nah la la la nah nah

He couldn't bring himself to actively destroy her. He couldn't. He loved her. So he did nothing as she began to self-destruct. As her rage began to boil over, she swept his current project, a simple healing potion, off the table and onto the floor. Clearing his mind, he stared blankly straight ahead, a voice in the back of his mind alternately screaming and wailing for him to stand up, take her in his arms and set things straight, tell her everything.

But he didn't.

Even when she physically forced him to look at her, he still did nothing. Some part of him realized she perceived the emptiness in his eyes and was stung by it.

Tears strangled her voice as she gasped, "Why?"

I didn't get around to kiss you

Goodbye on the hand

I wish that I could see you again

I know that I can't

"Why not?" The answer came out unbidden, the automatic response a long-standing joke between the couple, now perverted and twisted placed in this new context. His words were a whisper, the only weakness he'd displayed up to that point.

Severus' heart wrenched as she released her hold on him, almost tripping herself as she moved back, eyes wide and glassy with looming tears. Still unable to actively participate in destroying the witch before him, the woman he loved, he issued a statement of fact, knowing full well she would misconstrue his meaning.

"I am Slytherin. You knew that."

His heart breaking was a tangible, physical pain, a heated blade to the heart. As it injured him, it cauterized the wound, leaving him numb and all but trembling. That vague sense of being disconnected was what allowed him, enabled him to stand and move toward her, closed eyes and wet, screwed up face speaking volumes to the pain she was in.

He lifted his hand, taking notice of the way it shook. Closing his fist tightly, he willed the shaking to stop. Refusing to show any sign of weakness before his audience, he rotated his hand, and with the back of his index finger wiped away a falling tear. He closed his eyes for a second, taking a silent breath as she trembled beneath his touch. Stealing himself with the resolve that had carried him through many an audience with Voldemort, he leaned in to whisper his coup de grace, the one statement carefully pitched to play to her most deep-seated fears and inadequacies.

Ooooh

I hope you can hear me

'Cause I remember it clearly

"You didn't actually believe I could love a bushy-haired know-it-all, did you?" He had to whisper it, as he simply couldn't say it fully aloud.

You are so much more than a "bushy-haired know-it-all." You are everything I never knew I wanted and more than I ever dared or hoped to have. You are my heart, my conscience, my very soul. By destroying you, I destroy my very self. Perhaps that's what Potter intended.

Predictably, she rose to his baiting, changing from mournful to indignant rage like the flip of a switch.

He never saw it coming.

She'd been dutiful in her self-defense training as she never once telegraphed her intention before striking. The right uppercut to his chin came out of nowhere.

Stars exploded behind his eyes as he fell back, his greater height and weight, as well as the fact he'd been hit before, played into him keeping his footing. *Bloody chit hits like a prizefighter*. In a sick way, it made him proud.

The day

You slipped away

Was the day

I found it won't be the same

Ooooh

"You bastard."

The voice hissing those two words made his blood run instantly cold. Somehow, that hissing emanating from the witch who was his wife was light-years more unnerving than any comparative sound the Dark Lord had ever produced.

Silently, Severus watched the byplay of emotions that passed across Hermione's face. Even after all these years, she was still an open book, wearing her heart on her sleeve. It didn't take an accomplished Legilimens to ascertain what she was thinking. Realizing it was only a matter of moments before she completely lost the tenuous hold she had on her emotions, he surreptitiously began casting various nonverbal Shielding Charms. Secure in the belief that he was adequately protected from the impending maelstrom, he afforded himself the opportunity to drink in what would likely be his last look at the passionate creature he'd married.

Gleaned entirely from the way her gaze had turned inward, and the alternating gamut of emotions sweeping through her expression, he realized she was reliving their entire relationship, quite possibly from her first year at Hogwarts. Everything, every memory was taking on a whole new hue, colored with the flavor of his apparent betrayal. Even the sweetest of those memories would have a dark pall cast over it.

He braced himself as her eyes lost their inward, glazed appearance, her gaze focusing back on him. He kept his features and eyes carefully schooled to utter blankness. The lack of any kind of reaction on his part was guaranteed to spur on her implosion. She ever so graciously obliged him.

"Talk to me! Yell at me! Do *something, anything*, other than just stand there staring at me!"

The shrill feminine voice had acquired an almost maniacal quality. The sound tore at the edges of Severus' sanity, pushing the already strung-out wizard that much closer to the edge.

He was somewhat grateful he had opted to include a physical shielding charm as Hermione's Muggle upbringing showed itself, the witch snatching up the nearest object to her, an enormous empty specimen jar, and hurled it one-handed at his head. The jar deflected off the magical barrier, shattering against the stones to his side.

The physical outburst did nothing to lessen the brunette's outrage. Her eyes lifted to the rafters, she howled incomprehensibly, her hands lifting to tangle in her unruly locks, pulling painfully on the tresses. Whatever tenuous control she'd maintained snapped, her magic wrenching free of its reins.

An unholy wind whipped through the enclosed space. Anything and everything breakable around her shattered, the wild vortex fueled by Hermione's unrestrained magic encouraging the growth of various fires, explosions and reactions taking place as potions ingredients that shouldn't be mixed came into contact with each other.

I've had my wake up

Won't you wake up

I keep asking why

(I keep asking why)

And I can't take it

It wasn't fake

It happened, you passed by

Snape stood unmoving, ensconced in his own protective little bubble. At the far edge of his vision, he could just make out the flicker of another active Shield Charm. He dismissed it, already aware of what, or who, lay in that corner. *Merlin, but she is breathtaking in all her unbridled fury*. Robes protectively mantled, he knew she couldn't observe the evidence of his body's response to her.

"I HATE YOU!!!"

The magic-enhanced scream resonating within the enclosed space melded with the explosions rocking the edifice. Like pure sodium mixing with water, powerful blasts emanated from multiple points throughout the lab. Dust drifted in wavering trails, shook loose from the wooden beams comprising the ceiling.

Face twisted, features utterly unrecognizable, she shrieked at him. All of the pain, the disbelief, the betrayal was echoed in those three words.

"I HATE YOU!!!"

Inconsolable, face wet and eyes swollen from tears, Hermione turned on her heel and fled up the stairs, out of Severus' sight, and out of his life.

Now you're gone,

Now you're gone.

There you go,

There you go

Somewhere-

I can't bring you back.

Feeling like every bit of warmth had fled the world, despite the fires still burning within his immediate proximity, Severus stood unmoving. To the untrained eye it would appear that he did not even breathe. The Potions master made no attempt to quench the remaining flames or dispel the lingering fumes.

It was only when a silent shadow detached itself from a dark corner, gliding silently toward the dark wizard, that Severus moved. Still silent, Snape watched as Harry Potter, Savior of the Wizarding World, emerged from the gloom, wand waving to dispel the carnage left in Hermione's wake. The smirk twisting the once handsome young man's face made the elder wizard feel even more ill.

Potter slid to a halt before his former professor and began clapping slowly, sarcastically.

"Brilliant, Snape. Absolutely brilliant." The Prat left off the applause, his malevolent grin widening. "I honestly didn't think you had it in you."

Potter's mockery drove home the reality of what Severus had just done, the full weight of despair and loss hitting him like a physical impact. Anger and frustration at the untenable position he'd been placed in welled up.

Now you're gone,

Now you're gone.

There you go,

There you go,

Somewhere-

You're not coming back.

And all because this arrogant little bastard deigned to save my life. Why the bloody hell did he bother?

"I have fulfilled my debt to you. Release me." Severus did little to hide the utter contempt with which he held Potter. Oh, how he wanted to wipe that mocking expression and arched eyebrow off the face of The-Bastard-Who-Lived-To-Save-And-Then-Ruin-My-Life.

"That you have, Severus. That you have."

Snape visibly winced as the younger wizard uttered his given name, purposefully drawing out the esses in an uncomfortable rendition of Voldemort. It made the Potions master distractedly wonder if some piece of the Dark Lord lived on in the paralyzed man.

"You more than exceeded my expectations."

Oh, I'm sure I did. Enjoy the show, did you?" "Release me!" The former Death Eater could not keep the malice he felt from entering his voice, the two words a thinly veiled threat.

The day

You slipped away

Was the day

I found it won't be the same

Noo...

Potter waved his hand carelessly, like the utter destruction of his best friend was nothing. The Prat's flippancy only served to incense Severus further. "I hold your obligation to me fulfilled. I release you from your Wizarding debt to me."

Finally. Now, if only I could kill the little bastard without ending up in Azkaban...

Snape spun on his heel and strode out of the room, the dark laughter of Wizardingdom's Savior following him like a clinging shadow.

Something, some instinct, told him to stop when he'd only made it halfway up the stairs. He had to fight the desire to run from the edifice. It was from that position, one foot on the stair above, that he heard The-Little-Bastard's words.

"Hermione, Hermione, Hermione. You didn't really think you would get to live 'Happily Ever After,' now did you?" The sharp crack of an Apparation followed on the heels of that drifting voice.

With friends such as that, who needs enemies?

Severus finished climbing the staircase that let out into the sitting room from behind another bookcase. He wasn't sure what he expected, but the sight that greeted him was still shocking and dismaying. The destruction encompassing the cellar lab was mirrored above. The dark wizard need not proceed to the first floor to know that it was also in the same state.

Severus had little doubt that the mess was very much akin to the inner turmoil his surely soon to be former wife was feeling. It wasn't anything tangible, but Snape sensed that there was already something different about the house. That disquiet, that sense of *wrongness* quite literally chased him from the sitting room and out of the house.

The day

You slipped away

Was the day

I found it won't be the same

Oooh...

It was there, on the steps of the house he'd grown up in, the house he'd hidden in after Dumbledore's death, the house he'd first come to look upon Hermione Granger as a woman and not his former student in, the house he'd lived with and loved her in, that it finally sank in. She was gone.

She was gone.

And so Severus did what he'd made a habit of doing: he ran to the one person he knew he could trust.

Nah nah, nah nah nah, nah nah

Snape stayed calm long enough to Apparate to the gates of what had been Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry. The silvery megalith that commemorated the site, and those who'd died there, shone under the light of a full moon.

Severus didn't even notice.

His flitting black form made straight for the white monument by the lakeside.

It was there, by the side of Albus Dumbledore's tomb, the last man he'd called "friend," that he collapsed.

I miss you.

A/N: The character of Kathleen Frejne (pronounced Fray-nyah) is mentioned with the permission of her creator, LadyoftheMasque from her fic *For Someone Special*. Thank you to Lotm for allowing me to borrow her (once again) for a short time.

A super-huge thank you goes out to my beta, Kim who was so very gracious as to oblige me with such a short turn-around.

So.... do you all think I should continue this little drama? I have some notes and ideas for a larger, multi-chapter sequel tentatively titled, *Unhappily Ever After*. Please, drop me a review, let me know what you think, and cast your vote for sequel/no sequel.