

Shadowed

by morethanubargained4

The soft pit-pat of her footsteps echoed through the dark, ancient dungeon halls. Her approach to the end of the long and desolate hallway could have been classified as introverted if not for the indomitable look in her eye. She had a destination. She had a mission. She was going to fulfill it. Tonight. And so much the better if it was before she could be persuaded otherwise.

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Chapter 1 of 1

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Disclaimer:

If you think I am J.K. Rowling, you belong in St. Mungo's. I don't own, nor do I make any money, SHE DOES. I wish I did, though. Own Severus Snape, I mean. Grin

Summary:

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Author's Notes:

-->'Luna' in this selection refers to the moon.

--> This story takes place in Hermione's seventh year, during her last few days at Hogwarts.

--> Ever thanks to my beta-goddess, Belelaith.

Belelaith's Note:

This excellent story can obviously stand alone, but I have been promised not one, but two sequels. I am very much looking forward to these continuations. Please encourage morethanubargained4 by reviewing her story.

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Stopping before the empty expanse of the hallway, she muttered an incantation and some sort of password. An archway with a heavy oak door appeared. The arch was decorated with an intricate design of intertwining snakes. It was obvious that the creation was another one of the few done by the infamous Salazar Slytherin as it showed a distinct magical prowess that could only be attributed to him. The snakes would have bitten, and in result, poisoned anyone who tried to pass without invitation. On this occasion, however, though the silver snakes were hissing at her, it was in such a soft, melodic manner that each hiss blended with one another, calling to her, encouraging her to enter.

She hesitated merely for a second, before stroking the head of one of the silver snakes. It was almost undistinguishable from the others except for its emerald eyes, and in doing so she calmed the snakes enough to allow her to open the door and enter the heavily warded chambers.

Warmth that was not present in her walk through the dungeons swept through her body. The lighting was dim, only the silky hues of the flames illuminated the large expanse of the room. Not even luminous Luna could have lit the area, given that windows were not an option in an area so deep down in the bowels of the castle. Books of all kinds filled the wall to wall shelves, the small table near the exhausted armchair, and even, a couple of books were laid on the floor for some or the other reason.

"Hermione," a deep voice murmured from the shadows, causing her to shiver unabashedly.

The intensity of the voice *his* reminded her of how she had spent approximately every night for the past nine months. In immediate reaction, she strode towards the source, anticipating a sort of physical contact; a kiss, a caress from her passionate lover. But as a pale, beautiful hand came up to touch her, she cringed and took a step back, recalling her purpose for that evening. Quickly, she pivoted and walked towards the fire.

It had to end. Tonight. And so much the better if it was before she could be persuaded otherwise.

She had shed too many tears over this man alone... for his state, his wellbeing, his predicaments, their situation, everything... And now, as her last year was over and the train ride back home was an hour shy of happening, she did not want to beweeep her state any longer. She had made a decision and now it was the perfect time to follow through.

"Severus," she began, strangely comforted that her voice shook only slightly. Yet, for extra preparation, she took a deep breath and tried to compose herself.

"You once told me, before this all started, that never would you ask anything of me. And in return, I would never ask, nor e-expect anything from you either. Basically, this whole relationship if I even dare call it such is simply about sex... and only sex."

No sound came from the other end of the room.

Gaining confidence from what she believed was rapt attention, she continued, "But you must understand, I can't do this any more. I can't keep pretending. Severus, these past months have been exquisite to the point of perfection. Nothing will be able to compare to the passion you have showed me in the short span of time we have been together. By simply going along with the way things are, I'd be lying to myself. And..."

She trailed off, realizing she was rambling, most probably not even making sense at all. She knew how he despised that... that, and foolish wand-waving. As she turned, facing him, the light of the fire touched her bleary eyes, sending flashes across the room. Her forehead creased, when she noticed that though he had moved slightly forward from his original position, his face remained veiled by the shadows.

"The truth is, Severus, as impossible as it is to believe, I'm in love with you... with all my heart, body, and soul. I love you for who you truly are. I love each and every aspect of you the Potions master, the heartless yet brilliant professor, the Deputy Headmaster, the coerced murderer of Albus Dumbledore, and most especially the Severus Snape you show me... a lover, a friend, a companion.... Each and every role you play makes me love you so much more than I could have imagined possible."

Nothing. Not a sound did he make. If she wasn't looking closely, she would not have even noticed the slight twitch of his wand hand. He probably wanted to hex her into oblivion for even suggesting such rubbish.

By now, she was close to tears. And with the intense emotion that threatened to erupt, she couldn't impede the flow of words that spilled from her.

"I-I'm s-sorry, Severus... I tried, I really did! I tried not to think about you at all... I even tried to hate you at some point, just so that I w-wouldn't care about you so much s-so that I could concentrate in my classes. Everywhere I went, everything I did or thought of, reminded me of something or the other that we shared. Day and night, you haunted my thoughts. I could no longer s-study or e-eat without hoping that you were all right, that n-no harm had come to you d-during your potions classes. I nearly killed myself with w-worry last Christmas when Voldemort had called you for the last time. You came back s-so b-bloody and b-broken... and I-I had n-no idea what to do! D-did you know that I had broken in to your private stores and stolen a bottle of poison for my consumption alone? If they told me you h-had d-died, I-I w-would have been right there w-with you..."

She laughed bitterly, thinking how much she loved this cold, difficult man, who showed little discernable emotion towards her. Of course, not counting when they slept with each other not that anyone was doing any sleeping, mind.

"...and then... I don't know! All I know is that I can't go on living like this. I can't take pleasure from you and you from me and expect it to be just that and nothing more. I can't keep wearing the ring you gave me, to stay faithful to you alone... the ring meant nothing at all, I know... ownership, probably, and so that only you could have me, but nothing more than that. I wanted it to mean something more. A promise of some sort, perhaps."

"I can see it in your eyes, you know, the truth, and probably you see the truth in mine as well. Whenever I catch your eye, you hastily turn away; you can barely stand looking into such a plain, ordinary looking face. I love you too much, Severus, and it hurts so, so, so very much to know that you'll never feel the same way about me."

She waited a moment, for a reply, for some sound, for him to acknowledge what she had just said. Or maybe, if she was lucky, his undying devotion to her person and an admittance of his true love as well. If not, even the slightest movement of any of his body parts, could at the very least help her in deciding how she was to follow through.

When no response came, any hope that she had, left her system like the way a life abandons a person when a Killing Curse is cast. Suddenly, without her realizing it, bitter tears stroked the silk of her face, touching the tip of her nose and the expanse of her cheeks.

With one last look at the man enveloped in the shadows, she strode to the door and uttered the last thing that she assumed she would ever say to her lover. "I'm sorry, Severus. I guess this means goodbye.... I'll always love you..."

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PLEASE. Know that when you read, it's nice to review. It helps the author extremely. Though I want to beg for your reviews on this story, if you don't review here, just keep in mind that it's only polite to review other author's works. So if you don't review here, review somewhere else. Make our little author lives worthwhile. Thanks, morethanubargained4