

Choosing a Path

by Southern_Witch_69

Severus is surprised with a gift from Hermione and must make a decision about his feelings.

Only Chapter

Chapter 1 of 1

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Disclaimer: Not my characters of course.

SW says: I wrote this for Sbrande last year, who responded to an LJ post that I made, wanting to write drabbles for friends.

Her requests were:

Pairing: SS/HG

Keyword: Egypt

Severus looked down at the small box Hermione had placed before him, willing himself not to open it. What would be the point? She was gone. She'd decided to leave him. "As if I ever truly believed she'd stay," he said aloud wistfully.

Part of him knew that he was being a tad too bitter about her departure. He'd known since the first moment when he'd taken her on as his apprentice that she would only be spending two years with him. What he hadn't expected was to develop genuine feelings for her while she worked with him. He'd never told her of course.

"I wonder... perhaps if I had said something, she might have stayed—even told me that she felt the same." He frowned. Why had he never gathered the courage to tell her? *Pride. Fear of rejection. Uncertainty.* As far as uncertainty went, it became quite clear after she'd given him a small hug, placed his gift on the desk, and fled his office with a small goodbye that he did care for her deeply—loved her even.

Swallowing thickly, he sat down and pulled the box to him. It was her parting gift to him—given in thanks for his taking her under his wing and showing her the world and art of potion-making. Opening the box slowly, a smile formed on his lips. There was a gold timepiece inside, and on its cover there was an engraved ankh. When he opened it, a small folded note fell from inside the cover.

Severus,

I tried to find the words to tell you how I feel about you, but I lacked the courage my house holds dear. Instead, I've taken a page from Slytherin's book and am doing so after I'm gone. The truth is that at some point in the last two years, I fell in love with you. I'm not certain when, but I've dreaded this day for many months, knowing I would have to leave you.

At times I was certain that you felt the same way—a touch, a look, something—but you've said nothing. Please don't think badly of me if I've misread things, and keep this

timepiece as a gift of sincere gratitude. You know of my fascination with Egyptian hieroglyphics and their meanings, as we've discussed it often enough.

This represents life, Severus. Yours. You have a decision to make. I'll be leaving for Egypt tomorrow for that three-week vacation, and I would love for you to come since there are no classes until September. It could be the start of our life together—as something more than friends. If you do not wish to come with me, then you will carry on with your life, and I will not be bitter about it. I wish you the best of luck. As I may never get the chance to say this again, I'll close this letter with only a few words—words I should have said in person.

I love you.

Yours,

Hermione

Sitting in stunned silence for a moment, Severus thought over what her note had said. "She loves me," he said in wonderment. He needn't worry about his fear of rejection any longer. Pride didn't matter to him, not when he had this opportunity to have what he wanted. He knew for certain that he would choose to live life with her, starting with the trip to Egypt.

There was only one thing left to do: go to her. He closed the timepiece, affectionately ran his finger over the ankh, and pocketed it before swiftly making his way out to Disapparate to her home.

Finis

SW69's Notes: I really do love the ankh symbol, so I had to include that in here. :)