

Johnny Has Gone

by Soul Bound

Severus has found a way to end the war, but at what cost?

A One-Shot

Chapter 1 of 1

Severus has found a way to end the war, but at what cost?

'Johnny Has Gone For a Soldier' is an old English folk song about a girl whose love goes off to war, and she knows he won't survive. I sang it years ago and it's stuck with me because it's so poignant and beautiful. I thought I'd do a little piece along those lines, so here it is. Enjoy!

Here I sit on Buttermilk Hill

Who can blame me cry my fill

And ev'ry tear would turn a mill,

Johnny has gone for a soldier.

"Severus," she whispered as the wind swept through her wild hair. The tears flowed freely, though he'd told her not to cry.

Her mind replayed the scene, and his words, over and over. She knew it always would.

"I've done it, Hermione."

"Done what, Severus?" she asked, looking up at him from her place on their shabby sofa.

Nobody knew they were there. The entire Order, everyone she'd known and loved, save for the man in front of her, was dead. Even her parents had been taken from her. Darkness was falling on the Wizarding world, and only two people stood in its way. Hope had been fading from the two lovers for a long time. They had only each other. Some days it was enough. Some days, like this day, more was needed.

"Do you remember what I told you about the Dark Lord?" he asked. "Do you remember why I haven't been able to give him a potion to end his life?"

Hermione nodded, already fearful of where this was going. "Yes," she whispered. "He makes the person who gives him any drink take some of it first. He knows it will prevent him from being poisoned."

If it had been as easy as a simple poison or Killing Curse, she knew Severus would have killed the Dark Lord long ago. But he was well protected, and any plan they had thought of was suicidal. That was why she was already afraid.

"What have you done, Severus?" she asked, searching his eyes.

Her love, and lover, looked back into her eyes and broke her heart.

"I've found a way. A potion – to tie my life force to his."

"No."

"Yes," he repeated. "I've made it. Tonight, when I'm summoned, I will end his life, once and for all."

A sob escaped her. "No! Severus, you can't. There has to be another way! Please!"

Severus swallowed hard and remained strong. "There is no other way," he said flatly. "You know there isn't."

"Please, don't do this..." she said, standing up and crossing to him. She traced the side of his face and realised then how much this was killing him, too, as he reached up and held her soft hand tightly against his cheek. He turned a kiss to her palm and pulled her to him.

She wrapped herself in his embrace and cried, the pain inside her too much to bear.

She knew the battle was lost.

Me, oh my, I loved him so,

Broke my heart to see him go,

And only time will heal my woe,

Johnny has gone for a soldier.

"Please, Severus, I can't go on without you. We've come this far. We'll figure something out. Please."

"We have a chance to end this, for good. We have to take it," he asserted and explained to her what she already knew. "I'll take the potion mixed with a bottle of wine with me tonight. I'll offer my Master a glass. He'll insist I drink it first. When our life forces are bound, I will end it. It has to be this way."

Hermione closed her eyes tightly and held on to him for all she was worth.

"I love you so much," she said fiercely. "Don't you ever forget that. Don't you ever forget me."

Severus smiled at her. Just smiled, truly and purely. "No more tears, my love. This isn't the end. This isn't goodbye. When this life is over, there is more. When this life is over, we'll be together. Don't mourn me. When I'm gone, it will be up to you to finish what I couldn't do. The death of the Dark Lord is only the first step. You have to go on. Your life will move fast, and when it's over, I'll be waiting for you."

Hermione dared to believe him. And he kissed her. It didn't take away her pain, but knowing his words were true was like a bandage on an open wound. The loss of this man, the man she'd survived with, lived with... loved with, was already tangible, even as she held him in her arms. But knowing she would see him and hold him again, she breathed, and she smiled.

I sold my flax, I sold my my wheel,

To buy my love a sword of steel,

So it in battle, he may wield,

Johnny's gone for a soldier.

All too soon, Severus' Dark Mark burned black, and it was time to end it. Hermione closed her eyes tightly against the pain and fear for a moment.

Severus walked into their lab, and she followed. He mixed the potion with a bottle of expensive wine, and Hermione watched, dazed, as though through the eyes of someone else.

He gave her another kiss – bittersweet, at once gentle and frenzied.

"It's time," he whispered.

"Wait," she said, leaving the room for a moment. She returned shortly with a simple medallion on a chain. "Take this with you," she said. "Wear it. It will help you be brave."

He nodded and allowed her to string the necklace around him. She knew he didn't need it, but she needed him to have it. She needed him to take something of her with him, something tangible.

He kissed her once more. "I'll see you later," he said lightly, and before she could possibly be ready, he was gone.

She fell to her knees, broken.

Hours later, alone in the dark of the night, but for the stars above and the wind reminding her that the world was still turning, she brushed the tears away and smiled. Severus was right; it wasn't the end. It was only the beginning.

I'll dye my petticoats crimson red

Through the world I'll beg my bread

I'll find my love alive or dead

Johnny has gone for a soldier.

Author's Notes - Thanks go to SW69 for beta-ing this. She always picks up the comma mistakes I'm never sure about. I hope you enjoyed it(even as sad as it was), and as always, reviews are welcome!