

# The Spoils of War

*by Bambu*

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*Chapter 1 of 1*

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Disclaimer and Author's note: None of the original source material is mine. It all belongs to J.K. Rowling and those to whom she has assigned her rights. I only claim to be playing with the characters for a bit. This occurs post-HBP and many deaths are alluded to, but none are seen.

~oOo~

A thin finger traced the outline of her lips, the touch so light it barely made contact with her sensitized skin. Her breath grew ragged, her nipples so tightly budded they ached to be touched. Almost reflexively Hermione moved her right hand to do just that, to give in to her need, only to be stopped by a low whisper, "None of that."

The sound of his voice caused her breath to hitch and a delicious pulse to throb in the hooded nerve bundle in her mons. He had been silent thus far and she had kept her eyes closed as promised. He wasn't entirely comfortable with the physical demonstration of their relationship yet and she had easily read his unease when it came to being nude in front of her.

He had been so broken when she found him during the final raid on the Riddle House, manacled to a wall and left to rot in a dark broom closet. No one would have ever known if she hadn't smelled him in passing. Pity had initially moved her to save his life, flouting the mandates of the Ministry by hiding him at her parents' -- now her -- home.

No one knew that she had found him, that he remained alive, that she had healed him, or that she was going to make him hers.

This was that night.

He was an entirely willing participant. She heard it in the harsh sound of his breath, the quick intake of air past his imperfect teeth, and then what she had waited for happened. He nuzzled her neck just below her ear, where her pulse fluttered rapidly in time with her heart.

He nibbled her skin and she quivered in response.

Anticipation raced through her body, sped by the flood of adrenaline and desire. She hummed in approval and angled her head, expecting him to kiss his way down her neck. But he surprised her by tracing a path with his tongue along the tendon of her throat, over her collarbone. Arching her back she hoped for some contact with her tingling nipples.

It had taken months before he was healthy enough to venture beyond the guest bedroom, and those first few weeks had been fraught with continual worry. Hermione had never known what to expect when entering his room in the mornings. After the first week, when she'd barely left his side, he had managed to speak. Almost his first words had been to ask for privacy while he slept. She'd honored his wishes, with the caveat that she be allowed to check on him. Grimly, he'd acknowledged his need with an abrupt nod of his head.

Sometimes when she'd stuck her head into his room he'd be sleeping peacefully, bandages and unguents undisturbed. At other times, he'd thrash in his bed, struggling with the covers, attempting to call for help he never expected to receive. His voice would sound half-strangled and strangely subdued in his fear of being overheard by those who would torture him further, even as his primitive need overrode that fear. There had even been times when she had found him on the floor, where he'd flung himself in a desperate attempt to flee the monsters of his nightmares.

After the first three months he no longer flinched when she touched him, and he understood why she used so little magic.

The Ministry of Magic had kept her under discreet surveillance. Aside from a constant barrage of owls from Molly Weasley and Remus Lupin, the world believed the young woman was wallowing in her grief. In the course of a single night the wizarding world had been saved and Hermione Granger had been robbed of her entire family and closest friends.

Other than a brief statement given to the Ministry's Aurors -- Kingsley Shacklebolt survived the bloodbath at Riddle House and she had refused to speak with anyone else -- and a single interview granted to Luna Lovegood for her father's magazine, Hermione had holed up in her Muggle home. She had cast as many protection spells and wards on the house as possible, and by the end of the war she had been familiar with many esoteric spells.

After four months the Ministry had removed active surveillance; after seven they only sent weekly owls asking whether she had changed her mind about leaving the wizarding world. Her replies were vague, implying that she was healing slowly and only wanted her privacy.

It was fortunate she wasn't the only survivor of the decisive battle; public attention had moved on from a reluctant, press-shy Gryffindor to Pansy Parkinson. The former Slytherin had been revealed as a spy for the Order of the Phoenix, and gave frequent and gracious interviews. Hermione was delighted to relinquish her position in the spotlight.

The reprieve had given her time to devote to her patient. Healing him had required tenacity, a characteristic she had in abundance. During ten months, they had overcome many obstacles to reach a point of intimacy, and, for her at least, there was no going back. Severus' touching her now, like this, was a sign of how diametrically her life's expectations had changed.

Two fingers plucked at the nipple of her right breast, drawing her attention to the here and now. *Oh god*, she thought, almost lunging off the soft duvet, aching for more contact, more stimulation. She rotated her hips, clenching her internal muscles in an attempt to ease her growing need.

His dark chuckle only fueled her desire. "Do you want this, little witch?"

"You know I do." She gasped as she spoke, for he'd rolled her nipple between his fingers, causing an electric jolt from point of contact directly to her womb.

His removed his hand and she almost growled.

"And now?" he asked just before his mouth captured the tightly furled peak of her breast, his tongue flicking against the needy tip.

"Unh." For someone known for speaking her mind Hermione couldn't manage a more articulate response.

It had taken months before he had spoken to her beyond two urgent questions: *Why are you doing this? When are the Aurors coming?* Yet gaining his trust had been important to her. She had long respected him, had wanted his approval, even if her faith had been broken at one point. After bringing him into her home, Hermione had wanted to understand *something* in the horribly inverted reality her life had become.

When he had finally believed his welfare was important to her he began to talk. At first, their conversations were abrupt and clipped. However, after one sneering comment that she couldn't possibly understand the misery of his life, Hermione had *Leviosa'd* his scrawny arse through the still-wrecked portions of her home caring for him had been a full-time activity for months telling him, in vivid detail, about the deaths of her family, her friends, her enemies.

Severus had been silent for a week following that confrontation, but it had been a turning point for them both.

Now his silence was welcomed as long as he kept doing *that* with his mouth ... and oh, Nimue! Hermione moaned in response to his flicking the tip of her other nipple with his fingers.

No one had ever done that to her before.

"I have to touch you," she almost begged.

"We have an agreement." His answer was implacable, and he removed his hand from her body.

"Please," she whined, writhing a little.

"I will not do this with a little girl." The bed dipped as he moved away from her.

"You idiot!" She almost spat her reply, abandoning their agreement altogether and opening her eyes.

He was sitting at the foot of her wide bed, shoulders slumped and head bent.

Instantly she was remorseful, but knew better than to approach him physically, at least yet. "Sorry. I know I said I wouldn't touch or look. I know we've discussed this, Severus, but it seems unfair that I'm the one who receives all the pleasure."

His head whipped in her direction, and for a fleeting moment, his face was all naked emotion. "You do not think I get pleasure from touching you?"

"Who's the one fully dressed?" She pointed at him before continuing. "And who's nude?"

A twitch of his lips might have been a smile, and Hermione chose to take it as such. "Don't you understand yet? I *want* to touch you. I *want* to be with you like this."

"I do not think so." His spine stiffened and his shoulders were rigid. "It is one thing to heal a person's body and quite another to have that ugly, battered body touching yours intimately." The look he gave her then was filled with darkness and pain. "Trust me, Hermione; it is not a pleasant experience."

Like a Snitch she was off the bed, kneeling at his feet - nude -- a supplicant. "I'm sure it wasn't pleasant. I'm not belittling your experiences, but don't *you* understand? There was no bond of affection in your past encounters." If possible, his body stiffened further, but she hurried on. "They couldn't have felt for you what I feel for you."

She rose on her knees and Severus angled backward in surprise. Placing her hands on his wool-clad thighs, Hermione pressed herself between his legs until her breasts were brushing against the linen of his shirt. She looked into his eyes. Even though they were naturally dark, they were now so dilated they resembled nothing more than a piece of shiny obsidian.

Holding his gaze, she whispered with obvious sincerity, "Look as deeply as you must, or as you wish. I'm not prevaricating. I want to touch you, to know you as a man."

Once again she heard his breath whistle between his teeth, and the flash of vulnerability on his care-worn face pierced her heart. Very carefully she cupped his cheek with the palm of her hand and silently rejoiced when he leaned into her touch.

His eyes fluttered closed, then she dared ask once more, "Please."

In an instant, his arms wrapped around her like *Incarcerous* and she was pulled into his kiss. It wasn't their first kiss, but it was their first as lovers, for lovers they would soon be.

He stiffened once again as her fingers brushed past the remains of his ear on their way to fingering his baby-fine, oily hair. But he didn't pull away, and she moaned as their tongues twined with one another.

Once he had begun to open up to her, it had taken the better part of two months before he'd told her the entire story of the events which had taken place atop the Astronomy Tower. It had taken even longer for her to understand his motivations and the orders he'd been given. When she had fully comprehended the circumstances, she'd been ready to kill Albus Dumbledore all over again -- for his willing surrender of so many good people: Neville, Hagrid, Percy Weasley (who had been Dumbledore's spy and died before his family knew the sacrifices he'd made for the cause,) Draco Malfoy for being a pawn in a game between two powerful wizards, every Defense Against the Dark Arts teacher Dumbledore had hired knowing they couldn't possibly succeed in their position because of Voldemort's curse, the Potters, the Longbottoms, the Prewetts. But the betrayals which had hurt the worst were those which had cost Hermione most dearly: Harry and Ron and Ginny, and even Snape.

Out of all those she couldn't save this wizard was one she'd been hell bent on rescuing. That her entire heart had been given in the process had been unexpected, but not unwelcome.

They broke their kiss and she hugged him to her tightly, feeling his lean body pressed to hers.

"Hermione." His voice was raw with emotion, and she heard the unarticulated affection beneath the single word.

"Hmmm?"

"I would be willing to compromise."

She pulled back enough for him to see the brilliance of her smile. "Thank you."

Then, with trembling fingers, she unbuttoned his shirt, stroking each centimeter of uncovered pale skin as if she'd never touched a man before. Her touch was reverent, instinctive recognition that this experience was more than a physical coupling.

The unevenness of their commingled breaths proved that both knew the moment was significant.

When her fingers found the first rosy scar she looked deeply into his eyes then dipped her head to his chest. Gently, she kissed the barely healed flesh before laving her tongue along the crest of the ridged fold. He hissed, his fingers threading through her thick hair, flexing almost convulsively.

By the time she reached his navel, which had been sliced open at one point and was now a livid flap of skin, he was actively groaning and holding her head against him. It was as if her touch healed more than his body.

Leaning back, her palms smoothed up his torso, easily skimming the myriad scars, pausing to finger the flat discs of his nipples as they pebbled beneath her attentions.

"I want you naked," she cooed. Small hands, following the dictates of her desire, swept across his bony shoulders and down his arms, taking the navy linen with them. He moved his hand from her head, the shirt sliding from his arms before Hermione's hands reached his. Their palms met and their fingers interlaced for a moment.

He angled his hands, drawing her closer.

She smiled again before kissing him. This time skin met skin and they bent their arms so that when they released their fingers their hands were close enough to reach shoulders and faces.

Once they broke their kiss, each was slightly breathless, and they rested for a moment, foreheads pressed together. Hermione's eyelashes brushed Severus' closed eyes and she angled her head away from his. His eyes opened to meet her straightforward, unwavering gaze.

"Stand up," she directed, then raised an eyebrow before she spoke again, "please."

He almost smirked, a mannerism she'd forgotten he had it had been so long since she'd seen it. He rose and she leaned back, her face level with his groin. Hermione reveled at the sight of the straining fabric and a freshet of moisture gathered between her legs.

Her mouth actually watered in anticipation.

When his hands began to unfasten the button on his waistband, she stopped him with her fingers. Instantly his eyes met hers and she knew that while he trusted her he was too damaged not to question every step toward intimacy. Kissing the back of his hand, she said softly, "Let me."

His shoulders relaxed and he dipped his head in acquiescence.

Unfastening his trousers and lowering the zipper, Hermione discovered he had forgone pants, revealing a thin goodie trail leading to a nest of silken curls. Leaning forward she buried her nose in the vee formed by the opened zipper, inhaling the musky scent of his arousal and the soap he favored. His erection jerked in its cloth prison and she wrapped her hands around his narrow hips to his firm bum.

Slipping her hands under the waist of the trousers, she mimicked her earlier maneuver with his shirt, pushing down while tilting her head and allowing his turgid cock to spring free of its restraints.

One of his hands balanced lightly atop her head as if he was afraid of forcing her in any way. As a wizard who'd been forced to commit heinous atrocities, she could appreciate his self-discipline.

There was a droplet of liquid seeping from the tip of his glans, gleaming in the candlelit room, and she quickly glanced upward seeking his permission. His face was tense and focused, and she suddenly comprehended this was a pleasure with which he wasn't familiar. It occurred to her then that allowing a woman this sort of access was dangerous for a man who had lived so long on the edge.

While waiting for him to accede to her unspoken request, Hermione wasn't beyond resorting to bribery. She flicked her tongue between her lips to lick the enticing bead of liquid off the sensitive head of his erection. He grunted and his fingers tightened against her scalp.

Taking the gesture as assent, and before he could utter any form of protest, Hermione engulfed his silken textured shaft in her mouth.

Involuntarily, Severus bucked his hips and she smiled as she pulled back, sucking as she moved. His fingers tightened in her hair while she proceeded to lick, suckle, and kiss. He rocked gently with her actions, simulating coitus, and she relished the sound of his ragged breath. Her heart expanded with exultation.

One of her arms wrapped around his hips again, holding him close to her, and her left hand reached between his legs to fondle his scrotal sac. His hip motion ceased. It

was as if he expected her to stop the moment her fingers found the scar tissue where his absent testicle had been severed from his body. Hermione didn't stop. She knew about the wound. It had been one of the first healing spells she'd used after she'd rescued him.

When she slid her other hand around to stroke his erection while giving more direct attention to its mushroom head, his hips moved once more. Hermione began to sway on her knees, needing more than this stimulation to assuage her own quickened desire. She dropped her hand from his scrotum; her fingers fitting between her legs, dipping into the wetness she found coating her thick curls.

He spoke abruptly. "Hermione."

She stopped, compelled by the sound of his voice. It was unlike anything she'd ever heard him say before.

His hands found her shoulders, urging her to a standing position. As she rose, her knees cracked loudly in the quiet room. Hermione flushed and he smiled at her. It was a real smile, born of real affection. He caressed her cheek with a finger whose knuckles made it perfectly obvious they'd been broken a time or two, and then he took her hand -- the one which she'd used on herself -- and brought her fingers to his mouth. First he took a deep breath, almost growling, "Delicious," before he sucked her index finger into his mouth.

She shuddered, her smoldering need blazing to life. "Ooooh, yes! S-s-s-s ..."

As if that was all he'd waited for, Severus took control, proving that he was still capable of asserting himself. Within seconds they were lying on her bed, the cotton soft beneath her back, and he was fitted between her legs, his arms bracing his body at an angle above her. She felt his proud erection poised at the entrance to her body and knew he wouldn't proceed without further acknowledgement.

Their eyes met . . . and held.

She wrapped her legs around his hips, urging him to complete their joining. "Please." Her voice was barely a breath of air between them, but it was more than enough.

Without closing his dark eyes he granted her request, and slowly ... ever so slowly ... so that she felt every movement, every stretch of unused muscles, he entered her.

A strange sound escaped her throat; it could have been his name or a promise to the deities, she would never know, but he lowered his head to kiss her, never breaking eye contact. It was the most intimate thing she'd ever experienced in her life and she kissed him back with all the fervor of her wounded but living soul.

Where he got the strength from she didn't know -- only much later realizing he'd used some form of nonverbal spell yet he captured her hands, raising them above her head. Then while their hands were linked he snapped his hips, plunging the rest of the way into her. Hermione gasped at the sensation, but didn't look away. Severus' eyes were open, his feelings shining clearly in their depths.

Locking her legs tighter around his hips, Hermione rocked in the rhythm they found easily and she tightened her inner muscles.

Severus grunted and she smiled.

A coiling tension built deep in her abdomen and her eyelashes fluttered as she determinedly held her eyes steady on his.

"Brave little lioness," he purred before rotating his hips, speeding up his thrusts as if he couldn't last much longer.

The change in angle meant that his pelvis impacted against her throbbing clit on each thrust. It was just enough to take her to the brink.

She panted. "Cunning serpent."

Their rhythm grew ragged as they neared climax, but neither broke eye contact. He lowered his face to hers, nipping her swollen bottom lip; her clit throbbed from the additional stimulation.

Severus' hands clenched hers tighter. "Now, Hermione. Come for me now!" He bucked against her hard, spasming his own release deep within her.

That demand -- spoken in a voice she'd been conditioned to obey since she was eleven and waving a hand wildly in his class, desperate to show him that she'd belonged - - was all she needed.

Hermione came with a cry, his name on her lips. "Severus!"

It was a dozen years later, but she now knew that she belonged. Only it wasn't to the wizarding world. It was to him.

Her body shook, muscles constricting around his erection, still sheathed deep within her. Her eyes wanted to do nothing more than close as her spine arched and her legs contracted in reaction to her orgasm, but she held onto him tightly and kept her eyes open.

It wasn't Legilimency, but there was some form of magic working between them. Hermione *knew* that for the rest of her life there would never be anyone else for her.

Severus panted with exertion, but managed to release one of her hands to gently lift a stray curl clinging to her mouth. Aftershocks continued to ripple through her body as he brushed her lips with his, and his voice was soft when he spoke. "I doubt they are the words you want to hear, but I am uncomfortable with professions of love. I have seen how that word warps people. But you are mine, Hermione. I will not give you up."

"Yes," she cried, throwing her arms around his neck and pulling him atop her fully.

Their eye connection was broken, but it was all right. The magic they'd woven was still present. It surrounded them, weaving an invisible lemniscate between them: an infinite, living bonding.

She whispered, "Just as much as you're mine."

He rose to his elbows and nudged her with his large nose. She smiled at him and his mouth quirked in the funny half-curve which was the equivalent of a grin on Severus Snape. "I do not know why you want me, but I am yours for as long as you do."

Tears welled up in Hermione's eyes and her throat was tight with emotion. "It's a good thing wizards live a long time, Severus, because I'll want you as long as you live."

Tenderly she brushed his hair from his face before he moved off her; then grabbed her wand from the night stand. A flick and a swish, and a gentle cleansing spell of his crafting washed over them both. When she rolled over to place the vinewood back on the walnut table, Severus moved behind her, spooning her against him. His numerous scars were ridges against the smooth skin of her back, but Hermione hoped to feel him like this every night.

"Good night, Pet," he murmured, his breath evening out into the patterns of sleep.

"Good night, love," she replied, pulling one of his hands between her breasts, right over her heart. Her last thought before she fell asleep was that the rest of the world could take care of itself. She had all she wanted -- all she deserved -- right here in her arms.

And she was going to keep him no matter what.

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