

The Song the Summer Sings

by sshg316

The war is coming to a head and Hermione wants to know how Severus feels about her. What will he tell her? First Place winner in Poetry/Filk/Song Fic at the 2007 OWL Awards.

none

Chapter 1 of 1

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Disclaimer: All things Harry Potter belong to JKR. *She* belongs to Elvis Costello. Lyrics are in italics.

A/N: My eternal gratitude to **DeeMichelle** and **Subversa** for beta reading and polishing up this bit of fluff. Thank you for the hand-holding, ladies. This story would still be languishing on my hard drive if it weren't for you.

It had been a long four years since Dumbledore's death, and finally the last of Voldemort's Horcruxes had been located and destroyed. The Order of the Phoenix had spent the last week preparing, organizing, and strategizing. Now, the plans were complete; they were ready. In two days, Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix would take the offensive and attack Voldemort's stronghold.

Anticipating victory, but acknowledging the possibility of defeat, Harry had decided a party was in order. His wish was for everyone to have one last night of fun together, knowing full well that some might not return from battle.

And so, the party at number twelve, Grimmauld Place was in full swing, some members of the Order dancing and laughing, others ensconced in corners discussing strategy or just enjoying the company of friends. Remus and Tonks were in charge of the evening's entertainment, so Tonks had provided a Muggle compact disc player and her eclectic music collection. They set aside a small area of the room as a dance floor where a few couples were now gathered and dancing together, enjoying the current fast-paced selection. Early on, Harry had led Ginny to the dance floor, and there they remained, dancing to every song, fast or slow, together. Ron, Neville, and Luna sat at a table near the fireplace laughing uproariously and reminiscing about their school days at Hogwarts.

Hermione Granger sat alone in the corner of the room, nursing a glass of Harry's best Firewhisky. She was striving to be inconspicuous as she glanced around the crowded room, struggling not to let her eyes fall upon the one person she, for once, had no desire to see. Taking another sip of the burning liquid, she asked herself why she was still at this damned party.

Earlier in the evening, she had gathered her Gryffindor courage, pulled Severus Snape into a corner, and asked him outright to tell her how he felt about her. With only two days left before one or both of them could be dead, she wanted to know if he felt only friendship for her or something more. He had looked down his hooked nose at her with those cold, black eyes and sneered. "You wish to know if I feel more than friendship toward you?" he had asked. She had nodded and waited anxiously for his response, her eyes searching his face for some sign of ... something. Rather than answering her question, he had turned on his heel and stalked away, robes billowing behind him in a black velvet cloud not exactly the reaction she had expected. She was no longer certain they were even friends. Obviously, she had overestimated her value in his eyes. She blinked back her tears. She had thought she was worth *something* to the taciturn man certainly worth more than indicated by the disdainful way he had responded to her this evening.

After all, it had been *she* who had realized there must have been more to what happened on the Astronomy Tower that night four years before *she* who had found Dumbledore's Pensieve in the Room of Requirement, *she* who had managed to convince the Order that Snape remained loyal to the Light, *she* who had served as Snape's liaison to the Order, *she* who had healed him when he had been punished by Voldemort, *she* who had become his confidant, his friend. She snorted into her glass at that thought. Friend. Was she destined to be *friends* with every male of her acquaintance?

Yet, she was certain that they *were* friends. He'd told her things about himself he had never told another person, or so he had said. He had told her of his childhood, his family. She had been told of his reasons for joining Voldemort and of his reasons for turning to Dumbledore. She had learned why he decided to, in effect, sacrifice his life spying for a society that would likely revile him when the war was over ... assuming he survived that long. She had learned about his love for research, his hatred of teaching dunderheads, and his fondness for literature and the arts. She alone knew the depth of his grief for the surrogate father he had so admired and been forced to kill.

In turn, she had opened up to him as well. He knew of her doomed attempt at a relationship with Ronald Weasley. He had learned of her insecurities concerning her appearance and her fear that no one would ever see her as anything more than a walking, talking library. He had understood when she spoke of her feelings of having to prove herself as a witch in order to overcome the prejudices of a society that simultaneously lauded and reviled her. When her parents had been attacked by Death Eaters, it had been him she turned to for comfort and asked to accompany her to sit vigil at St. Mungo's. He knew more about her true self than anyone else, including Harry and Ron. What's more, he understood her; he *got* her. Was it any wonder that she had grown to love him, not just as a friend, but as a woman loves a man?

Not to say that it was all sunshine and roses. Oh, no. Severus Snape was still a snide, sarcastic bastard, and she was, in his words, still "an insufferable know-it-all." They were as likely to be found arguing heatedly over the latest research in *Potions Quarterly* as they were to be quietly sitting together in the library, reading. That was what made their *dare* she think it? *relationship* so special to her. They accepted each other as they were, proverbial warts, greasy hair, buckteeth and all.

After everything they had been through together, she had hoped that he might feel at least a little something for her, and she wanted to know what that something was before it was too late. Instead, her question had caused him to flee from her, and she had most likely ruined whatever was between them.

Sighing to herself, she decided she deserved another drink. As she stood to head over to the bar, a shadow fell across the table. She looked up to see who would disturb her private little sanctuary, only to find herself staring into the obsidian eyes of the very man she was trying to avoid. Suddenly anxious, she sat down once more.

Severus Snape stared at her intensely, his eyes searching her face. After a long moment, he straightened himself to full height, bowed slightly and offered her his hand.

"Dance with me," he softly commanded.

"P-pardon?" she stuttered, her eyes wide in confusion.

"You wished to know my feelings toward you. If that is still your ... desire," he murmured, "then dance with me."

The silky quality of his voice slid over her, causing her to shiver despite the warmth of the room and the effects of the alcohol she had imbibed. Gazing up at him, she hesitantly stood and, trembling slightly, accepted his proffered hand. He led her to the middle of the make-shift dance floor, turned, and took her right hand in his left. She felt the warmth of his other hand on her waist as she placed her small, cold palm on his broad shoulder. His hand slid to the small of her back, pulling her closer as he lowered his head to whisper in her ear.

"Listen carefully, Hermione, and you shall have your answer."

He nodded to Remus, who smiled as he returned the nod and, with a swish of his wand, halted the driving beat of the Weird Sisters. Another swish, and the melodious strains of a piano filled the air.

"Shall we?" Severus asked softly, and then together they began to dance.

She

May be the face I can't forget

The trace of pleasure or regret

May be my treasure or the price I have to pay

She

May be the song the summer sings

May be the chill the autumn brings

May be a hundred different things

Within a measure of a day

Gracefully, he led her around the floor, his eyes never straying from her face. She was mesmerized by his expression; what could he possibly be thinking? His countenance was unreadable, and yet his eyes were filled with a warmth she had never seen before. Tearing her eyes away from his, she looked over his shoulder to see Ginny and Harry, arms around each other, smiling as they looked at her knowingly. A lone tear slid down Ginny's cheek; she freed one hand to wipe it away, then did the unimaginable and gave Hermione a thumb's up.

Shaking her head to clear her mind, Hermione returned her attention to the man who was holding her so gently. Once again, she found herself staring intently into his eyes, listening to the words being sung as Severus had instructed.

She

May be the beauty or the beast

May be the famine or the feast

May turn each day into a heaven or a hell

She

May be the mirror of my dreams

The smile reflected in the stream

She may not be what she may seem

Inside her shell

Hermione's gaze remained locked on his, but as the bridge began, she cocked her head to the side and whispered, "Beauty or the beast? Heaven or hell? I'm not sure that's altogether complimentary. Are you saying I confuse you, Severus?"

His thin lips twitched ever so slightly in amusement. "Hush, witch, and listen," he answered, pulling her even closer by placing their entwined hands safely upon his chest.

Hermione began to wonder if perhaps she had given up hope far too easily. With a small smile, she moved her left arm from his shoulder to his waist and tucked her head under his chin, enjoying the feeling of closeness, and breathing in the unique scent of Severus Snape.

She

Who always seems so happy in a crowd

Whose eyes can be so private and so proud

No one's allowed to see them when they cry

She

May be the love that cannot hope to last

May come to me from shadows of the past

That I'll remember til the day I die

Hermione stopped dancing, her eyes snapping to his in an instant.

"Severus," she whispered tremulously, her chocolate eyes shimmering with hope. His only response was the slight upturning of one corner of his mouth.

She

may be the reason I survive

Her eyes filled with tears, and she was certain he could feel her heart pounding in her chest.

The why and wherefore I'm alive

The tears spilled over her cheeks as her breath came in small gasps.

The one I'll care for through the rough and ready years

Severus released her right hand and raised his to her face. Long fingers wiped away her tears and then caressed her cheek as he gazed lovingly into her eyes.

Me, I'll take her laughter and her tears

And make them all my souvenirs

Slowly, Severus bent forward until his forehead touched hers ever so briefly before turning his head to place soft kisses at her temple, her cheek and finally upon her waiting mouth.

For where she goes I've got to be

The meaning of my life is

She, she, oh, she

As the music ended, Severus ended the kiss only to slide his lips along her jaw line to her ear where he murmured, "Does that answer your question, Hermione?"

She felt as if her heart was in her throat. Somehow she managed to choke out, "Yes, Severus."

He looked down his long, hooked nose at her, his eyes narrowed. Giving her an imperious look, he said, "Good." Abruptly, he dropped his hands from her, turned, and stalked toward the door. He stopped inside the doorway and looked back to where she stood, dazed, still in the middle of the dance floor. He rolled his eyes, cocked an eyebrow, and reached out to her impatiently.

"Well? Are you coming or not?"

The sound of his voice broke her reverie; she started, blinking as what had just occurred finally worked its way into her consciousness. Giving him a brilliant smile, she joined him at the door and tucked her arm in his. "Of course," she said, allowing him to lead her away for a more private celebration.