

These Dreams

by Southern_Witch_69

A dream leaves Hermione disturbed, and she decides to talk about it to Severus.

Only Chapter

Chapter 1 of 1

A dream leaves Hermione disturbed, and she decides to talk about it to Severus.

Disclaimer: These characters aren't mine. I'm only snagging them for a bit to write a little story for my mate, Droxy. Happy Birthday, doll. I love knowing you're a simple click away when I need someone to talk to.

Thanks to CocoaChristy for the quick beta read.

Hermione sat down heavily and stared at her hands sadly, tears brimming her eyes. "I know you've always told me not to dwell on dreams that leave me sad, but sometimes I can't help it." She held up a hand and raised her eyes, a few tears escaping and rolling down her thin cheeks. "I'll feel better somehow if I tell you about this, but..." Emotion made her throat feel like closing, and she had to pause to force herself to breathe slowly. "But," she began again, "it's so sad, and I woke up crying...pillow wet with tears and even my hair dampened!" She frowned and clasped her hands together, squeezing softly.

"The first part was odd. I was walking through a dark corridor at Hogwarts. The sconces that usually lit when I passed refused to light. I remember feeling as if something horrible was creeping up on me in the darkness, but I was afraid to run forward for fear I'd stumble, allowing it to catch me."

"Who's there?" Hermione asked urgently, turning to gaze back into the darkness behind her. The only reply she received was the pounding of her heart. Her feet began a frantic shuffle forward, hoping to get her as far away from whatever was following her as they could. Though she knew she was in a Hogwarts corridor, she had the unexplainable fear that she could fall through gaping holes in the floor. Her wand refused to work, the sconces wouldn't light, and there was only a small amount of moonlight filtering in the large windows. It was as if even the clouds were against her, hiding away the one thing that could truly help her along and get her out of her predicament.

"And suddenly, I was no longer in the Hogwarts corridor. I was high up on a mountainside and trekking down a narrow path laden with rocks and a perilous edge that threatened to crumble with each step I took." She shivered. "I can still feel the cold wind hitting my skin and whipping my hair and robes about... as if it were trying to throw me off balance so that I'd tumble to my death."

Body quivering, teeth chattering, she tried her best to stay close to the rocky wall of the ridge. She no longer felt as if she were being pursued, thankfully, but she knew somehow that it was important for her to make it down to the small town below as quickly as she could without falling to her death in the process. A strong gust of wind slammed into her from behind, propelling her forward, only to change direction and slam back into her from the front, pushing her back slightly.

"You won't win!" she yelled to the wind. "I'll never stop trying! I will get to him!"

As if nature agreed, the harsh breeze died down, the clouds moved to uncover the glorious full moon, which lit her path, and the rough terrain of the narrow path became a

wide trail of plush grass on flat ground. "Thank you," she murmured.

"It's strange how dreams do that, isn't it? It's like it suddenly changes, and part of you knows it's a dream, yet it seems all right that it's happening that way." She laughed slightly and wiped at her eyes with clenched fists. "This is when it gets... distressing."

Hermione was finally in a small valley and nearing a cobbled street where dark homes lined it on either side. There was a smell of thick smoke in the air, the industrial type, and she thought that was odd, as the mill hadn't been working in many years. The instant she stepped onto the roadway and her boots began clicking against the stones, she went rigid, hearing the scariest sound imaginable.

"Oooooowwwwwwoooooo..."

Not even stopping to look around, Hermione quickly raced forward, running as fast as she could, yet feeling as though she was barely getting anyplace. She knew that if she paused, even for an instant, the howling werewolf, who had obviously caught her scent somehow, would overtake her. And just what the hell was a werewolf doing in this area anyway? Had Remus been round to visit Severus and forgotten to take his Wolfsbane?

Finally, just twenty feet away, like a beacon calling to her, Severus' small home came into view. She could see candlelight through the window and knew he was waiting for her. "Severus! Open the door!" she called out, hoping he'd hear her. The only thing she heard were the stomps of her boots against the cobbled path, some heavy grunting...or growling...and what sounded like sharp nails digging into the ground.

"Oh, dear God," she murmured as she felt hot breath on the back of her neck. Just as she'd lost all hope, Severus threw his door open, wand already extended and a jet of light already hurdling towards her chaser. She'd never felt so happy to see him in all of her life and slammed into his body eagerly, wanting the security he gave her, relishing the feel of one of his arms closing around her and keeping her close to him.

"It's gone now," he whispered, his silky voice resonating through her body. "You're safe, my Hermione."

"You've always made me feel that way, you know. Safe. It's as though nothing can harm me if you're near, even now...after all this time." Hermione edged closer and reached out. "Ready for the part that had me crying like a silly girl?"

Following Severus to his bedroom, she watched as he undressed slowly and got into bed under the thick duvet. "You look so tired."

"I'm feeling weak tonight," he replied, closing his eyes and sliding lower, trying to get comfortable.

Hermione quickly moved to his bedside and took the cloth out of the large water bowl on the small table next to his bed. After wringing it out, she placed it against his forehead. "Before you go, Severus," she began in a choked voice, "there are things that I need to tell you, that I never got to tell you until now."

One of his hands moved to clasp one of hers tightly. She relished the warm, soft feel of his flesh against hers and began to cry silent tears while looking down at their interlaced hands. His touch felt so good, so cherished. She never wanted to break the connection. "I feel so guilty about things."

"What things?"

"I should have spent more time with you." She shook her head in frustration. "What did I do instead? I had to traipse off around the country to do my work, sometimes not seeing you for a week or two at a time."

"It's your job, Hermione. I've always understood that, and I wouldn't have had it any other way." He gave her a small, feeble smile. "Besides, if we'd see each other daily, perhaps we might not have worked out this long, eh? You know how I like my personal time to myself..." He coughed slightly.

"I should have given you a child. I know you wanted one. I was selfish and thought there would always be time for us...after I'd established myself in my career." She sniffled, trying to keep herself from sobbing loudly. "And now look what's happened! You're sick and dying." The last word came out as a whisper.

"Whether we had a child or not never mattered to me. You're wrong there, as it was always only you that I wanted. When you agreed to marry me, then I wanted for nothing else. I've loved my life and everything about it." His free hand lifted and wiped her cheeks before lowering and clasping her other hand. "I'm fading," he announced without remorse. "Let go of your burden."

"Please don't leave me. I love you so much. There are so many things that we've not yet had time to do. I have so many things to say to you, to show you..."

"You always have my love...no matter if I'm in the same room with you or not."

She leaned closer and pressed her lips to his pale cheek and then rested her forehead against his, not even feeling the cool dampness of the cloth resting there. Staying that way for what felt like a long amount of time, she finally realized that he had passed on, that his hands were no longer warm, that his chest had stilled. Hermione moved back to gaze down into his face. If she didn't know the truth, she'd swear that he was simply sleeping.

Gasping, she saw a tear resting on his cheek, not gliding down to waste itself in his soft, black locks. She knew better than to believe it was his tear, as it had likely fallen from her face as she'd been crying over him. She could feel herself being pulled away, and she knew this world... this dream would fade away from her completely. It was always the way--he would come to her and leave her all over again. She was loath to leave him, to let go of the hands she held onto tightly, as if wishing she could extend some of her life and warmth into them.

"And that's when I woke up, truly crying, and it was obvious that I'd been crying for a long while even though I'd been asleep. And..." Her voice trembled and broke. Her hands moved to her face to cover her eyes as she wept openly. Minutes later, sniffing, she finally continued. "And that's when it hit me. You're gone from my life. Oh, God, it was like losing you all over again."

She caressed his tombstone lovingly. "Severus, I'm so sorry I wasn't there for you that night. If only I hadn't taken that assignment down in London..." Her trembling was becoming uncontrollable, but she didn't care. "If only I'd kept my word... I could have saved you. I know it."

Tracing the epitaph carved in the marble, she found her voice again. "It feels like these dreams come to me purposely. It's like you're trying to tell me to move on and that you forgive me and don't want me to feel guilty." A bird chirped nearby in agreement, causing her to laugh bitterly. "Trying to give me another sign?" Shaking her head, she continued, saying, "Well, I can't do it. I can't get over losing you. I've thrown myself into work and have simply tried to pretend that you're at home waiting for me while I'm on assignment."

The chirping bird took flight in a flutter of angry wings. She watched its progress until it was only a speck in the distant gray sky. "It just hits me so hard when I do allow myself to grieve, to feel something." Arranging his flowers and casting a charm on them so that they'd stay fresh for many days, she slowly got to her feet. "I'm leaving tomorrow," she said as she placed her wand back into her pocket. "I'll be gone for a week or more, but then I'll be back. We'll talk more then. I love you, Severus." Her words were shaky, and the tears had stopped finally. With a sigh, she made her way back towards the home they'd shared together.

While she enjoyed having dreams of her husband, sometimes they were hard for her to bear, and she doubted they would ever ease her of the guilt she felt over his untimely death. She'd told him that she was taking an assignment that would keep her away for two weeks, and he'd been angry because she'd already made a promise to

help him with the last stages of his experimental potion. She'd tried to explain that by taking this last assignment, it would give her the amount of field time she needed to put in for a job in the office with normal hours. He'd reluctantly agreed, claiming he would ask Harry to help him.

She snorted bitterly as she remembered his sarcastic words. "Oh, indeed, I'll ask Boy Fucking Wonder to come over and take part in something he's no clue about!" he'd said, spittle flying from his mouth as he glared at her.

Yes, she'd known he was being snide, but she'd thought that he truly would allow Harry to help, especially after she'd Floored Harry and made arrangements. They'd never been all that friendly, Harry and Severus, but Harry loved her enough to grant her a favor. The problem was that Severus had always been proud. He'd never talked to Harry about helping him after she'd left. And she'd left with him still angry with her.

She hadn't been able to Floop him until five days into her assignment, and he hadn't answered her. She'd simply assumed that he was either out or was ignoring her...as some form of punishment. If she'd had more time, she would have gone through to see exactly which it was. However, as fate would have it, she had to disconnect nearly immediately, leaving her to vow that she'd check on him later. And when she'd finally done just that days later, she'd found him in his laboratory, stiff and cold upon the floor. The potion had exploded and covered him.

At first, she'd feared that he'd possibly committed suicide, tired of life with her, but then she went over his notes and realized that it was a freak accident. He'd obviously thought he could do the steps without help. Guilt never quite let her get over the role she played in his death. Had she Floored him earlier or gone through the first time she tried to check on him, his life could have been saved. The Healers at St. Mungo's said that he'd been rendered immobile and died slowly over a period of a few days, though it wasn't likely that he'd been conscious at the time.

That did little to comfort her.

Southern's Notes: I know. It's a bit sad. I've based this on an experience I've had recently. It always feels good to write these things out. It happens to be my friend's birthday today (Droxy), who adores tales of this sort, so I thought I'd dedicate this to her.

I hope I did the dream scenes justice. Most of my dreams are crazy--scenes shifting at will, no power to run, things are different than in life. And another point is that guilt and regret are hard to live with. Sometimes they never leave, even when we know that we should get on with life.