

Not All Is Lost

by DeathSong

Severus mourns Hermione after the Final Battle. A story of redemption. One-shot.
Please read and review.

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Chapter 1 of 1

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He walked slowly through the graveyard, garbed in his usual attire of all black. His black eyes searched for a headstone sadly. His eyes finally rested upon it, and standing in front of it, he read the name engraved in the stone:

Hermione Jane Granger

19 September 1979 12 November 2007

Love knows not the bounds of death.

He smirked sadly as he read her epitaph. 'She said that before the Final Battle,' he thought. His face grew solemn once more as he looked at her headstone. A winged grim reaper stood upon it, its wings spread over her grave, the head bent, gazing at the ground in sorrow, and it seemed to lean heavily on its scythe. The eyes appeared to glow an amethyst purple, and they wept oily, black tears that left iridescent white trails.

Severus stared at the grave of his beloved Hermione, the last person he had cared about and who'd cared about him in return. She had died not five days before in the Final Battle. The entire staff and students that had been at Hogwarts at the time were dead, gone. He was the last, the sole survivor of that bloody battle--only because she had thrown him to the ground when the Killing Curse had been cast at him by Lucius Malfoy. She took the curse for him, and he wished she hadn't. 'What possessed her to do that?' he wondered.

He knelt on the ground, his knees sinking into the fresh soil atop the grave. The moonlight, shining briefly through the thick, grey clouds above, slowly descended behind the mountains. He brushed his fingers lightly across the black stone over her name.

"Hermione," he whispered to the darkness. A single tear left a shiny trail down his pale cheek. His right hand clutched the cold stone as his left covered his face, and his head fell forward, his shoulders shaking as he sobbed in great sorrow.

His tears fell to the soil of her grave and, seeping into the earth, seemed to sow the earth with his despair and sadness. Rain began to fall softly from the dark clouds above, and one would think the earth wept with him.

He raised his head, and through his tears he gazed at the headstone. Tears ran down his face as he leaned forward and kissed the cold stone.

"You have become an angel, Hermione, like I always said you were. You are in Paradise while I--" He took a deep breath, closed his eyes, and in a barely audible whisper continued, "While I must still struggle to redeem myself to join you there. At what price, my redemption? At what price, Hermione, at what price?"

His eyes squeezed shut as though he were in immense pain, and he pressed his hand against the wet, cold stone, his head hung heavily, his other hand resting upon his

thigh. One final tear fell from his eyes and landed on the grave. The rain had stopped, but he took no notice, and in the East, pale rays of sunlight began piercing the clouds. The statue shed a black tear, and it rested upon his hand, but he did not notice that either.

Nor the footsteps that approached from behind. It was only when a hand rested upon his shoulder that he opened his eyes and looked up slowly. His eyes widened, and he took a quick intake of air.

Hermione stood beside him, her left hand on his shoulder, all in white with an aura of light around her. Her curly hair glimmered in the pale sunlight, and her deep brown eyes sparkled as she smiled a small smile that warmed his soul.

"Hermione?" he breathed.

"Yes, it is I, Severus. I am here," she said reassuringly.

"You're an angel now, my beloved," he said with an air of regret.

"Yes, I am an angel, Severus, just like you always said I was."

He slowly stood up, his eyes never leaving hers. "I'll never be forgiven and join you in Paradise, Hermione. The price of my redemption is too high," he lamented. "I will never join you there. I will spend eternity in the depths of Avernus."

Hermione raised her hand and caressed his cheek, and he closed his eyes and leaned into her touch. His hand reached up and covered hers as he opened his eyes and gazed at her sorrowfully, and she whispered, "You will join me in Paradise, Severus. I paid the price of your redemption with my life. You are forgiven! Don't ever doubt that, Severus. Don't ever doubt that!"

Severus' eyes widened slightly as he looked at her in shock, and her hand fell from his cheek and rested on his chest, over his heart. She felt its rapid beating and the warmth of his body. Severus sighed deeply and looked deeply into her eyes. His hand rose and caressed her cheek and then he wrapped both arms around her and pulled her to him, embracing her tightly. His soul was saved and redemption was his! He was finally free! His eyes closed, and he breathed in the familiar vanilla scent of her hair and spoke, his voice muffled by her hair, "Thank you for paying the price of my redemption, Hermione. It is a debt I'll never be able to repay. Thank you."

Their arms tightened around each other for a second before they slowly pulled away slightly. Severus kissed her lightly on her forehead, and they looked at each other for a moment. He brushed a stray lock of hair from her face.

"I'll join you in Paradise in time, Hermione, but not quite yet. Now go!" he urged quietly.

Her eyebrows furrowed for a second, and she gave him a quizzical look before shrugging and murmuring, "All right, but don't take too long." She put her arms around his neck, and she kissed him passionately. He pulled her against him and took over the kiss. His tongue sought entry, and she sighed as her mouth opened, allowing him in, and their tongues duelled for dominance. Slowly, Severus ended the kiss and pushed her away from him gently but firmly.

He took a deep breath and whispered urgently, "Go, Hermione!"

"All right. Don't keep me waiting, beloved," she warned mockingly before vanishing in flash of blinding white light, her voice echoing in the early morning air. He stared at the spot where she had been, then sighed and shook his head. He turned and rested his gaze upon her headstone and then at the grim reaper.

"You no longer need to weep for her, reaper," he said quietly "She is at peace, and soon I will be as well. Do not weep for either of us."

Slowly the reaper raised its head a fraction of an inch, and its empty sockets bored into Severus' eyes.

"I will shed my tears for eternity. Remember, Severus Snape, though you are forgiven, Darkness will always reside in your heart and in your soul. It will never leave you. It is the price you paid when you accepted the Dark Mark. Don't ever forget that," it said cryptically before returning to its original state and becoming as stone once more.

Severus warily stared at the statue for a long moment. 'Whoever made that headstone must've messed with it,' he thought. He shook his head and walked slowly to the black gate of the graveyard. And with one last look towards her grave, he Disapparated.

The grim reaper raised its head fully and, to the nothingness, whispered, "He will always be part of the Darkness. He must remember that ... for eternity."

Once again, the reaper became stone and only returned to life once more to observe Severus' return to the graveyard the following night. In the light of a waning moon, he strode purposefully towards the dark, mist-shrouded forest behind the cemetery. He did not spare a glance in the reaper's direction, and before reaching the forest's edge, he vanished with a swirl of smoke. He would never return to this mortal earth.

The reaper raised its head and gazed up into the heavens until the dawn came, and in the clouds made gold by the sun's rays, it observed the reunion of Severus and Hermione, together at last in Paradise. As the reaper watched, it pondered... 'Maybe the Darkness had been purged from him when Hermione paid the price of Severus' redemption. Maybe Darkness is no longer a part of him. Maybe...'

Once the sun topped the mountains, Severus and Hermione disappeared, and the reaper froze, its head lifted towards the sky as if looking at hope and redemption. As though it was telling the world that even if one is immersed in Darkness much if not all of their mortal life, redemption is still within reach after death that not all is lost.

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