

The Ghost of My Lover

by m1s7ress

Hermione dies two years after she and Severus marry. All Severus has left of her is the little girl she left behind. What he doesn't know is that she still lives.

Prologue

Chapter 1 of 4

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Summary Hermione dies two years after she and Severus marry. All Severus has left of her is the little girl she left behind. What he doesn't know is that she still lives.

Disclaimer: I do not own Harry Potter and co. They all belong to the all and wonderful J.K. Rowling. I'm only hired to twist their lives into misery.

Thanks to QueenP for beta-ing this chapter!

Warning! There is mild adult situation in the beginning you've been warned.

PROLOGUE

Hermione ran her nimble fingers through his silky ebony locks. The woman sighed in bliss as she felt his hot mouth take in her already hard nipple.

"Severus," she moaned rubbing her body against him.

"Hermione," the baritone voice reached her ears making her shiver. The man smirked, and lowered his head to her ears. "Scream my name Hermione," he ordered, feeling her shudder beneath him. "Scream it."

He thrust into her. He felt her fingers grab his hair as she screamed from pure pleasure. His nose nuzzled her cleavage; he pushed into her again, and again, and again. He groaned in pleasure as he poured his seed into her. Sliding out of her, he nestled in the crook of her neck smiling slightly at her ragged breathing.

"How did you like that, love?" he questioned, placing butterfly kisses along her neck. She moaned in response, her body itching for more.

The man above her chuckled to himself. "Quite well I guess," he murmured running his fingers through her curly locks.

"Severus," she managed to croak out. "I ... I need you."

He growled in response. Placing himself between her legs again, he hovered over her. He bent down and roughly claimed her lips. He ran his tongue against her bottom lip, asking for entrance. Opening her mouth, he plunged his tongue into her moist cavern. The fingers of one hand started caressing her stomach, seeking out her breast.

He moaned quietly into the kiss as he found her erect nipple.

Rubbing his index finger and thumb against it, he could feel her getting wet (as his knee was currently at her entrance). Not hesitating any longer, he shifted his weight and rammed into her. She clutched onto his shoulders, bliss clearly written on her face.

"Oh Gods, Severus!" She cried.

She woke up that morning to find sheets strewn across the bed. At first her eyebrows furrowed in confusion, until she remembered what happened last night. She looked to her left, to find him sleeping. Moving the sheets carefully she got out of bed. She felt a hand grip onto her arm. Frowning she turned around, only to face him.

"Where do you think you're going Mrs. Snape?" Severus questioned.

Hermione shivered in the cold bed. She had known the potential consequences of marrying Severus Snape yet that hadn't stopped her. She didn't regret her decision of marrying the man. He was wonderful and a loving husband and father. To both she and her daughter. 'Liana,' she thought painfully. She gasped as another feeling of pain, coursed through her already frail body. Damn that Karkaroff!

The deranged Headmaster of Durmstrang had placed her under the Cruciatus Curse for 12 hours. It was a miracle that she had survived at all. 'It's not my fault,' she thought bitterly to herself, 'I was in the wrong place, at the wrong time.'

She barely heard the doors of the hospital wing swing open. She felt a strong, masculine hand cup her chin. Opening her eyes she looked at the one who had caused her disturbance. She saw icy onyx black eyes stare down at her.

"Sev," she whispered, her arms stretching out towards him. "I've missed you," she murmured.

He placed a finger to her lips silencing her. "Don't talk love," he said in his commanding tone of voice. "You must rest."

Hermione shook her head vigorously, though she instantly regretted it as she was rewarded with her with an intense headache. Gasping at the pain her hand instantaneously reached for her the center of her forehead. Severus grimaced at the pain he saw, which was etched perfectly onto his wife's face.

"Hermione," he whispered taking a seat on her bed.

He picked up the small individual on the floor and placed her on his lap. His small two-year-old daughter was smiling up at him fondly. Clapping her hands the child wrenched herself from her father's grip and bounced onto her mother. Hermione cried out as her daughter landed on her abdomen. Severus instantly snatched his daughter off Hermione. The little girl's big chocolate brown eyes widened as she saw her mother turn in pain. The little girl's bottom lip began to tremble. Sensing that his daughter was about to cry he patted her back gently whispering calmly to her.

This helped somewhat. She had managed to release herself from her father's grip again and crawled quietly to her mother. Hermione's face was scrunched up due to the pain her daughter unknowingly caused.

When feeling chubby little fingers touching her cheek. Hermione moved slightly, turning to face her daughter's big brown chocolate eyes. The young child's bouncy black curls reached just below her ears. She smiled at her mother showing a pair of white baby teeth.

"Mama," little Liana said happily, clapping her hands upon seeing that her mother was okay.

"Liana," Severus said softly though he still managed to give his daughter a bit of a fright. Hermione gave him a pointed glare, but he shrugged it off. "Liana, apologize to your mother."

The little girl frowned at what her father had just said. "Jize?" she finally said with a smile on her face. Hermione laughed softly.

"Yes, say I'm sorry to your mother," Severus stated plainly for the child.

Liana nodded her head and looked at her father for a second, before looking to her mother.

"Ory er!" Liana said, bursting into a fit of giggles.

Severus groaned slightly and lifted the giggling girl from her mother's chest. Hermione just smiled. Even in the darkest of moments her daughter was always able to make her smile. The bedridden witch was glad that it was summer. Had the term been in session, she wouldn't have been able to stay in the hospital wing of Hogwarts, close to her family. The school's would have given her odd looks.

Severus looked his daughter, who had now stopped giggling, in the eyes. She tilted her head to the side, and looked intently at her father.

"Say, sorry," Severus said.

"Orry," she repeated.

"Mother."

"O'er!"

Severus crinkled his nose at her. "That's good enough, I suppose."

Hermione chuckled as the little girl repeated what she just said. "Severus she's only two years old," Hermione reprimanded.

"She's still a Snape," Severus said haughtily. "Snapes excel in everything."

"Go find Grandpa," Severus said to his daughter. The girl didn't listen to him though as she pinched his prominent nose. She giggled when her father gave her a dark look. Setting her on the floor, he pushed her slightly towards the opened door. The little girl looked confused as she looked back to her father.

"Liana, go find Grandpa," he said pointing towards a picture. Liana's eyes lit up as she saw the picture. The old man in the picture wore a silver beard with half mooned spectacles, behind which were twinkling sky blue eyes.

"Grandpa!"

"Yes, yes," Severus said in a hurry. "Find Grandpa."

The little girl hurried out of the room. A silver glow surrounded her, before she set off on her mission.

Severus instantly turned around to face his distraught wife. Taking a seat next to her he held her hand. Upon seeing his wife's condition, his eyes filled with pity. Hermione

took no regard of the look, simply smiling at her husband. She knew it was her time to finally part from this world. That scared her. She didn't want to leave Severus, or her little girl behind. How would they survive without her?

"How are you feeling?" Severus asked trying to make conversation.

Hermione sighed. "Not good," she answered truthfully. "Severus, I'm afraid. I'm not going to make it," she whispered the last part.

Severus felt his heart constrict from the pain. No! She couldn't leave him! She was too young to die! Twenty-six years of age was still young, she just couldn't leave him. He felt incredibly selfish at the moment, yet he had never been in this situation before. He didn't know what it felt like to lose someone you truly loved. He had never gotten to know his mother, only his father. Severus could very well say, without feeling guilty, that he did not consider Samuel Snape his father.

"Hermione, don't think that way," Severus finally said. "You'll make it. You're a Snape ..."

"That has nothing to do with it," Hermione replied placing her other hand on his.

He looked at her and saw tears start to well in her eyes. Just as the first tear started to fall he wiped it away without a second thought. "You'll get better," he said with determination. "I promise you that you will. I'll get you the best healers money can buy."

Hermione shook her head slightly. "Severus don't start making promises to me, when you know that you can't keep them." Severus opened his mouth to object, but she held up a firm hand silencing him. "Listen to me, Severus Snape. I'm dying. You can't deny it. I can't deny it. You need to accept it," she stated. "Ever since I was found on the floor of Karkaroff's office everyone was shocked that I survived this long. I was put under the Cruciatus Curse for 12 consecutive hours. Be thankful that I've at least survived this far. That I can tell you goodbye," she said tears streaming down her eyes. "Don't worry though, you'll have Liana. Take care of her."

Severus shook his head not wanting to let her truthful words sink in. Though they were already taking affect. "I will refuse to hear you speaking so negatively, Hermione. You will survive this."

"No, I don't think I will Sev...oh!" Hermione gasped in pain.

"Hermione!" Severus called as he jumped from the bed. He watched his writhing wife as a spasm of pain shook her body. "Hermione!"

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Liana stumbled as she walked into a very hard figure. Landing on her bottom her bottom lip started to tremble.

"Darling girl," a majestic voice reached her ears, "what are you doing out here without your parents?"

She looked up to find the very person she was looking for. Reaching for him, she exclaimed, "Grandpa!"

The old man chuckled, and pushed the sleeves of his robes up. His long fingers wrapped around her tiny waist, as hoisted her onto his hip.

"Hermione!"

The Headmaster frowned upon hearing the frantic voice of his potions teacher. He looked at the little girl who was turning her head from side to side looking for the voice.

"I think we should go see what Daddy's doing, shall we?" Dumbledore asked the little girl. She nodded her head and giggled as Dumbledore started bouncing her on his hip.

The two arrived at the hospital wing to see five people around a stretcher. Dumbledore frowned; those present were Harry, Ron, Severus, Poppy and Minerva. When he heard a strangled cry of pain, his frown deepened. The little girl he was holding heard her mother's voice. As they neared Liana started to cry.

"Mama!" She cried her arms stretching out towards her mother. Tears began streaming down the little girl's cheeks when the object of her affection didn't respond to her desperate cries. So she tried again, "Mama!"

Dumbledore held the little girl in the same position upon his hip, not paying heed to her frantic cries for her mother. He let out a quiet breath of relief as the young woman stopped writhing in pain.

Hermione opened her eyes suddenly; they were big and round. She looked around seeking for her husband. Spotting him, she raised her hand. "Severus," she groaned.

Severus hurried to her side, not paying attention to his daughter at the moment. "What is it love?"

"Take," Hermione shuddered her breathing was ragged. "Take care of Liana and yourself, for me," she whispered bringing a small hand to his face. She caressed it lovingly and smiled at her husband. "Kiss me," she said suddenly. "Kiss me one more time."

Severus obliged, he brought his lips down on hers. He kissed her fondly. He couldn't help but think that this would be his last time kissing her like this. She slowly pulled away, looking towards her crying daughter. Hermione's frail arms reached for the young girl. Dumbledore brought Liana to her mother.

Hermione took her into her arms and shushed her.

Standing on the other side, Harry whispered, "'Mione this doesn't mean ..." he trailed off, scared to finish his sentence.

"Sorry Harry, Ron," Hermione said, her attention temporarily straying from her daughter. "I love you both though," she murmured her eyes shining with unspent tears. "You were both brothers to me."

"'Mione," Ron cried, tears streaming down his freckled face. "You can't leave 'Mione!"

"Ron," said Harry pointedly. He took hold of his friend's arm and tugged him to the other side of the room. Before moving, both young men gave a heartfelt hug to their friend.

"Mama," Liana said, finally getting Hermione's attention.

Hermione smiled down at her daughter, tears visibly shining in her honey brown eyes. She encouraged Severus to set the girl down, despite the pain it caused.

"Liana," she said firmly. "Mommy loves you, don't forget that okay?" The little girl just stared at her mother. Hermione took her daughter's hands within her own bringing them to her side. "Mommy's always going to be with you. No matter what, okay?"

Her daughter didn't have an opportunity to respond as another wave of pain shot through Hermione. Causing her to cry out. Minerva quickly reached towards the little girl and pulled her off the crying woman.

"Mama! Mama!"

Minerva removed the howling girl from the already stressful hospital wing. She tried comforting the little girl who was distraught and calling for her mother.

While still holding the child, the grandmotherly witch swayed from side to side trying to provide comfort. "Sh. Sh. Shhh...Liana hush now," the Transfigurations Professor said in a frantic voice. Once the sounds from inside the hospital wing had ceased, Minvera brought a now sniffing Liana in. The sight before her was quite an unsettling visual.

She never thought that she would ever see the day when she would find Severus broken. Yet, there he was crying into his wife's chest, which was unmoving and devastatingly pale.

"Albus what happened?"

"She's dead Minerva."

"Albus she ..."

"She is."

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Hermione opened her eyes only to see three tunnels. She blinked, feeling confused. Looking around her, she noticed the one she came out of was blocked with a huge rock. She looked to the other two. The first emitted blue light, the other an extremely bright white light. She started walking towards the intersection. In the center, a sign read:

"Welcome to the three tunnels. The tunnel from which you came is the now blocked. To that life , you cannot return. You now must choose how to proceed. Please choose your path carefully."

END PROLOGUE

Authoress Notes

How was it? This is my first Severus/Hermione fan fiction, so I am sorry if the characters are a bit OOC.

Chapter One

Chapter 2 of 4

Three years later, Severus still mourns his dead wife.

Disclaimer: I don't own the characters of Harry Potter. We all know that they belong to the wonderful, and fabulous J.K. ROWLING. All rights to Liana Snape belong to me.

Thanks to QueenP for beta-ing this chapter. Without her, this would all be something completely different!

Recap

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End Recap

CHAPTER ONE

THREE YEARS LATER

Severus sat down in his desk chair, watching the fifth year students gather the needed ingredients for their potion. He loathed them, every single one of them. They had happiness; they had something that he obviously didn't have.

But you have Liana.

Severus sat still for a moment, his gaze never leaving the piece of parchment in front of him. It was true; he had Liana, his little girl. Yet, that wasn't the kind of happiness he craved...happiness with the one you loved, the one who loved you back in the same intimate passionate way. Around the classroom, the students had felt the need to talk amongst themselves as they had sat down.

"I thought I had said to collect the potion ingredients that you needed," he stated as he stood up. "Nowhere in my instructions did I include the phrase 'while talking.'"

The Gryffindor and Slytherin fifth years immediately hushed up as their professor found a need to hover over them. Severus heard a soft creak as the door that lead to his personal chambers opened. He instantly turned around his heart thudding in his rib cage. Liana was the only one in his personal chambers.

He swiftly moved towards the door, while the students looked on in curiosity. Everyone craned their necks to take a peek at the little girl who had just strolled into their potions class.

Everyone gawked at the little girl. They had only seen this little girl in the Great Hall, but she was never with their professor. Two years ago she had been with his

deceased wife, but now she could be seen with Albus Dumbledore, or any of the other staff members.

Five-year-old Liana walked towards her father, not noticing at all the stares she was receiving. She marched towards her father and tugged on the sleeve of his robes. Severus bent down so that he was eye level with the five-year-old girl, who was looking more and more like her mother.

"Liana, what are you doing out of bed?" he questioned, ignoring the squeals from the girls in his class.

"Daddy, I had a bad dream," she said rubbing her eyes.

Severus frowned; he didn't want to discuss anything with his daughter with his class here. "Liana, can you go find Grandpa? You can tell him about your nightmare. I'm busy at the moment. I've got a class to teach, and you're disrupting it."

He ignored the sniggers coming from the males in his classroom. He turned around and glared at them. "Keep working on your potions. There is no need to tune into my conversation with my daughter," Severus snapped. "Well, get on then."

Severus muttered to himself about 'stupid ignorant pricks,' before turning back to his daughter who was staring wide-eyed at them.

"Daddy, why are you so mean to them?" Liana asked as she stretched her arms towards her father, signalling that she wanted to be picked up. Snape scowled, pondering if he should answer her question.

Picking her up, Severus answered: "Liana, don't ask such trivial questions."

Severus placed his daughter into his big black chair, then looked at her sternly. "After I finish giving instructions to my students, I need you to go to Grandpa," Severus instructed. Turning around, he watched as the fifth years pretended they were working.

"You will all finish the draught by the end of this class. You will also hand in an essay on moonstone at the beginning of next class," he commanded.

Turning his back on them, he cast a spell on his daughter. She glowed bright silver for a moment as the spell took effect, a means of helping her find her way to her intended destination.

"Now, you will find Grandpa in his office," Severus said, taking her into his arms and putting her down on the floor. She nibbled on her lip before scrunching up her nose at her father. "Do you remember the word to get past those gargoyles?"

Liana nodded her head excitedly. "Yes, the word is ..."

Severus put a finger to his lips. "Remember what Grandpa said?"

"It's a," began Liana looking around the room for unwanted listeners, a smile plastered on her face, "secret." She finished in the softest voice she could make.

"That's right, a secret," Severus whispered in return. "Now, hurry a long now, Sneaky Snake. You have to go find Grandpa, and tell him about your nightmare."

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Liana walked down the deserted halls, humming to herself. She remembered her Uncle Harry teaching her a fun song. She stopped walking for a minute, trying to remember what it was that he taught her. 'I'm a little...' she smiled as she remembered it.

"I'm a little teapot, short and stout. Here is my handle. Here is my spout," Liana sang to herself, doing the hand actions as she walked towards the gargoyles. She turned left once she saw the red walls.

"When I get all steamed up, hear me shout! Tip me over and pour me out!" She giggled happily to herself.

Reaching the gargoyles, she stood staring them wide-eyed. Their bulging eyes were staring down at her. Standing up on her tiptoes, she tried to touch one of the extremely sharp looking fangs. She frowned when she couldn't reach them.

Scrunching up her face in determination, her chocolate-brown eyes dead set on the object before them, she sought a way to reach her goal. She looked around the gargoyle trying to see if there was anything she could stand on to give her the height she needed.

Finding a crook to place her foot in, she stepped up. She grabbed hold of one of the gargoyle's outstretched hands, hoisting herself close to its face. Her foot had left the crook near the bottom of the gargoyle, when both her knees settled in the crease of the gargoyle's arms. The little girl looked at the fangs, a smile plastered on her face at her accomplishment.

Firmly taking hold of both of the gargoyles fangs, she caressed them. Her mouth formed an 'o' in utter amazement at the soft feeling of the stone under her skin. Her eyes settled on the tips of the fangs, however. The tips of the fangs, which she was pretty sure were sharp. Hesitatingly, she stretched her petite hand forward. She bit her lip as her forefinger got close to the top of the fang.

As her finger touched the tip her eyes widened at the prickling sensation on the pad of her finger. She gasped, pulling her finger back and sucking on it. That was a bad decision as the little girl came toppling down onto the floor in a big heap. She landed on her bottom. Unaffected by the pain inflicted she stuck her tongue out at the gargoyle.

"Jolly Ranchers!"

Liana watched in awe as the gargoyle jumped to the side, showing a path of stairs leading upwards. She stepped on the first one and stamped her foot twice. Just like magic, the stairs started moving towards the little girl's destination. She stepped over the threshold and smiled at the past Headmasters and Headmistresses as they talked amongst themselves.

Liana walked to the glass case that held Godric Gryffindor's sword. She heard from her Auntie Ginny that Uncle Harry, in a secret chamber, had pulled the sword from the Sorting Hat. Auntie Ginny said that he saved her life when he did that.

"Liana." The little girl turned around to see an amused looking Uncle Harry and Uncle Draco.

"Uncle Harry! Draco!" She launched herself at both of their legs, making them both bit unsteady.

"Hey, hey, young lady," Draco said sternly to his godfather's daughter. "Watch it. You might hurt someone by giving them such a rough hug."

Liana giggled and shook her head stubbornly. "No, I won't hurt anyone."

Harry just shook his head, not wanting to get into the conversation. "Ana, where's Grandpa?" Harry asked looking around.

"Potter, do you see him anywhere?"

"Eat dung Malfoy."

Liana looked at both of her Uncles with an incredulous look on her face. A sudden smirk appeared on her face. "Eat dung Malfoy!"

Two stunned faces turned to look at the little occupant in the room.

"Shit," Draco muttered to himself, turning away from the little girl.

"Shit, shit, shit!" The little girl danced happily in little circles, repeating everything that they were saying.

Draco's eyes widened in horror. Severus was going to murder him.

"No, Liana it's 'shoot', okay?" Liana frowned, but nodded her head.

Draco looked around the room, seeing as how Dumbledore wasn't here.

"The old man isn't here anyways, I'm leaving," he mumbled.

He hurried back down the stairs. Harry shrugged his shoulders and walked over to the little girl. He picked her up and sat down in one of Dumbledore's oversized chairs.

"So, why are you here in Grandpa's office?" Harry asked the little girl.

"Daddy sent me here," the girl answered easily. "Daddy said that I was dissrupting his class, and that we'll talk later."

Harry quirked an eyebrow, "Darling, I think you mean disrupting."

Liana's eyes brightened, nodding at what her Uncle had just said. "Yeah, Daddy said that word!"

Harry chuckled and held the little girl close to him while she fiddled with his snitch necklace. This little girl that he was holding was the only physical remembrance he had of Hermione. It was entirely that git's fault! If he hadn't let her go into Karkaroff's head quarters she wouldn't be dead now. She would be alive...alive and bloody healthy at that too!

Yet, there was to be no dwelling on the past. All that mattered was the little girl in front of him. He didn't care that she was Snape's only daughter; all he cared about was that she was Hermione's only daughter. He would fulfill his place as godfather to the girl by watching over her every single day and night no matter how many times it annoyed the greasy git.

He had thought that the bastard of the dungeons would have changed, since Hermione had decided to fall in love and eventually marry him. Harry was mistaken; he was every bit of the idiot that Sirius had proclaimed.

"Harry, Liana, it is unexpected to see you here."

Harry was jerked out of his thoughts to see Professor Dumbledore standing there, smiling at the pair.

"Grandpa!" Liana jumped out of Harry's arms and ran to give the old man a hug as he stretched his arms out to embrace the young child.

"Albus," Harry said smiling as he stood up.

"Harry, what brings you to my office?" questioned Dumbledore as Liana started fiddling with his long beard.

Harry shook his head, not wishing to have the desired discussion in front of Liana.

"I'll speak to you about it later Albus," Harry said. "Malfoy, Ron, and I need to talk to you, that's all."

Bidding a farewell to both of them, Harry retreated down the steps. His thoughts were still around Hermione. He missed having one of his best friends to talk with. What he wouldn't give to at least see her walking through the castle one final time.

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Liana tugged on Dumbledore's beard a bit too hard, bringing all the attention back to her.

"Ouch," Dumbledore said rubbing his chin. "Liana, that wasn't very nice of you," he said in a reprimanding voice.

"I'm sorry Grandpa," Liana apologized her eyes tearing. She wrapped her small, slightly chubby arms around his neck as she patted the back of his head. "I love you, and I promise not to do it, again."

"Apology accepted," Dumbledore said heartily. He sat down in his chair, settling Liana on his lap. "Now, I think you needed to tell me something," he said with a knowing tone.

Liana nodded her head. "Oh yes Grandpa, I need to tell you something veryvery important," she said. "I had a bad dream, a nightmare," she said in a low voice.

Dumbledore pretended to look shocked, just for the sake of it. He loved to play along with her; she was the only one who called him Grandpa. The name gave him a significant sense of belonging.

Liana opened her mouth to tell her tale when she felt a sudden cold shiver run down her tiny back. She curiously looked around the room. The windows were closed, so it couldn't have been the wind. As it was a warm day for the second week of September, the room was relatively warm. She looked to the door and found that it was closed.

"Is there something wrong?" Dumbledore asked concerned.

Liana nodded, she brought her face very close to Dumbledore's ear and whispered, "I think someone is spying on us Grandpa."

She heard someone snort and cough, causing her to jump. She looked around the room, her eyes wide with fear. Her heart was thudded in her chest. Someone was in the room, someone she didn't know, and that scared her.

"Darling," Dumbledore replied, causing Liana to jump. "I think you're overreacting. The only people in this room are you, the past Headmasters and Headmistresses, and I," Dumbledore continued in a comforting voice.

Liana nodded her head, though she didn't seem convinced.

"Now, what was this dream you were telling me about?" Dumbledore asked steering her away from thinking that there was someone in the room.

This caught Liana's attention immediately.

"Grandpa, in my dream I saw Daddy crying over someone. And Auntie Minnie was holding me, and she brought me closer to the someone," Liana said in a hushed voice, as she drew closer to Dumbledore's ears to make sure that no one was listening. "I saw Mommy on the bed!"

"I know I don't remember Mommy, but I saw the pictures of her and Daddy in Daddy's room. Mommy was wearing a white dress in one of the pictures. That's my favourite picture of her you know," Liana said in a tone that usual five year olds take with the elderly.

"I see, and what else happened in your dream?" Dumbledore asked.

Liana thought about it for a minute before responding: "Daddy was crying over Mommy and she wasn't moving. Then the picture changed and I saw a bad looking man. He was laughing." Liana finished her tale, her voice now very quiet. "I didn't like the bad man Grandpa," she said quietly. "He looked crazy."

Dumbledore thought about what he should say to the little girl. Liana was obviously having dreams of what had occurred in the past. He couldn't very well tell her that the bad man in her dreams was the very one who had killed her mother. She didn't need the added stresses that knowledge could bring. That information would cause this girl to have even more nightmares.

"Liana, I think you should run along now," Dumbledore said quietly, "Daddy should be in the Great Hall soon."

Liana frowned and placed her hands on her hips in a huff. She gave her Grandpa the most evil look she could muster. "There's something you're not telling me," she stated.

Dumbledore chuckled; the little girl would certainly be the death of him. She was always onto his little plans. Not that others weren't, but they were never upfront about admitting he was up to something.

"Darling, your dreams are dreams, that's it."

Not satisfied with the answer she got, she jumped down from his lap and opened the door to his office.

"You're mean, Grandpa." With that said, the little girl slammed the door in Albus' stunned face. The old man shook his head and placed his head in his palms. Dumbledore's long fingers stroked the sides of his head.

"You know," he said suddenly. "She's becoming more and more like both her father and you every day."

A silver figure appeared from out of the bookshelf, smiling at Dumbledore.

"I'm afraid you're right."

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Draco stalked through the halls, snapping at the idiotic students still wandering there.

"It's dinnertime, not chat-with-your-mates-in-the-halls time," Draco seethed at a couple of fourth years. "You can continue your useless conversation in the Great Hall; five points from Hufflepuff."

Approaching the Great Hall, he moodily sat down at his usual seat. Being the Charms Professor was totally unbearable, especially when you taught ignorant sixth year Gryffindors.

"Nice day Malfoy?"

Draco turned his head to see Potter sitting next to him, swallowing what looked to be meat loaf. "Oh, yeah, loads of fun," he said sarcastically.

"Ginny get moody on you again?"

Draco nodded his head glumly; he had been trying to escape his wife's attention. Apparently, she had noticed and wasn't happy about it. It didn't help that she was very pregnant. Draco thanked Merlin, wherever he was, for not giving Dumbledore the crazy idea of letting her teach at Hogwarts. She would be muttering things under her breath, just like Hermione had done.

The thought of the deceased woman, as usual, made Draco even grumpier. 'Stupid Gr-Snape.' Even after the two had been married for four years, Draco still couldn't get over the fact that his godfather had married the know-it-all that had outsmarted him in every subject by at least 5%.

Yet, he reluctantly accepted her after she became Mrs. Severus Samuel Snape, officially becoming his godmother. It was she who had given him advice on how to win his wife, and it was she who had helped him anytime he and Ginny had a row. He would never willingly admit it to anyone, but he did miss Hermione. There was no one else to help him after his rows with Ginny, except for maybe Potter. But Potter, it seemed, liked watching him suffer.

It was a selfish thought, no doubt about that, but he did miss her help. Though, that wasn't all. He missed having his Godmother around. It still felt weird to call her that, but he had *always* resorted to using that whenever he wanted something from her. But that was besides the point. With Hermione gone, his godfather was the moodiest man that ever walked the planet. He was even worse than before, and that was saying something!

"How's Luna?" Draco asked the raven-haired boy.

He watched as Potter shuddered. He smirked. They were both in the same situation, and he wouldn't change it one bit. Both their wives were too pregnant to walk to the Great Hall for mealtimes, so they remained in their chambers, which was just fine with the two men.

"Pregnant," was the answer Draco received.

Harry looked at Draco with an odd expression on his face. Draco noticed and raised an eyebrow. He nudged his head to the side indicating the area behind Draco. The Charms Professor turned his head around to see his godfather sit down beside him. Next to him sat Liana.

Harry prayed to Merlin, and all the powerful witches and wizards who were among the stars, that Liana forgot his little row with Malfoy in Dumbledore's office.

- - -

Liana spotted her two uncles and waved to them. She watched as the two waved back, though not as enthusiastically as she had. The little girl plopped herself onto her father's lap, making him sigh. She watched as her father piled food onto her plate, as well as his.

"Daddy," she said. "Draco and Uncle Harry taught me two new words today!" The little girl bounced happily as she made her father switch seats with her.

"Really," Severus said, looking highly uninterested. "And what, pray tell, are these new words that they taught you?"

"Shoot and shit!" Liana watched as her father's eyebrows shot up.

Severus had taken a sip of his red wine from his goblet; it had seemed like a good idea at the time. Although, he hadn't expected his daughter to say such a foul word.

Severus turned to his godson with a look of both pure astonishment and rage.

"Draco," he said in quiet voice filled with rage. The made the younger man gulped. "Why did you teach my daughter such foul language?"

Draco stuttered out an answer: "Y-you see U-uncle Sev, Liana caught Potter and I having a... just a little row and..."

Severus turned away from his Godson and continued to place food on his daughter's plate.

"Save the explanation for your wife," Severus spat enjoying the look of horror that passed over his Godsons face.

"Uncle Sev," Draco said in the same voice he used to use on his father, "you can't tell Ginny. She's pregnant. Any added stress won't be good for her."

Severus gave him the is-that-all-you-could-come-up-with look, that his mother gave him whenever he tried to explain the empty muggle condom wrappers in his room.

Draco mumbled something to himself and cut his steak with enough force to make the plate crack.

"Eat your vegetables, Liana," Severus demanded. He felt something snap in him when his daughter shook her head. "Liana, eat them."

Severus took a fork and poked a carrot piece with it. He then attempted to feed his daughter, who refused to open her mouth.

"Liana, I said eat your vegetables." By now, everyone in the Great Hall stopped eating their meal to watch the little argument in the Snape family.

"Liana," he said warningly.

Liana huffed in her seat and shook her head. "Eat dung, Daddy." The silence in the Great Hall was such that the entire student body heard Liana's small voice. All eyes turned to Professor Snape to see what would happen.

Severus' eyes widened slightly at his daughter's use of foul language. The obvious work of his treacherous Godson and the arrogant Harry Potter. He noticed all the students watching him intently and proceeded to give them a glare that quickly informed them of the death that would follow should this be discussed near him.

"Liana," he said in a reprimanding voice, "who taught you such language?"

"Draco and Uncle Harry," she whispered looking down at her plate of food. "*Isdung* a bad word, Daddy?" she asked, scared for the lives of Draco and her Uncle Harry.

"Very much," Severus said sharply.

Severus turned around to look at his Godson and Potter. He watched as they tried to shift away from him.

"Well, it's been a lovely dinner and all gentlemen," Harry said, wiping his lips with his napkin as he got up. "Alas, my wife needs my attention..."

He trailed off after seeing the look on Snape's face. "But I guess there could be time to have a little chat with you Severus," Harry said hastily.

Severus' lips curled into a sneer. "What on earth were you thinking when you taught my daughter such language!"

Harry and Draco shared a look and glared childishly at the little girl who was watching the interaction with wide eyes.

- - -

Severus carried his daughter into her room. He had grudgingly let her have her room the colour 'pink,' though he would've preferred it to be dark green, light grey, silver, or black. He felt a little better, though, when she had asked for green stripes, despite the fact that she chose French Green.

He tucked her in, and was about to leave her room when he heard a slight, "Daddy?"

He turned around to find his daughter looking very upset and crying. He assumed it had something to do with what had transpired at dinner. He pushed back a black curl away from her face.

"Why are you crying Little Snakelett?" he asked.

Liana sniffed, before answering her father, "Daddy, I don't want to be left alone," she said through her tears.

"It's alright," Snape answered. "I'm just going to be next door grading papers. Besides," he chided, "you're a big girl."

Liana shook her head in defiance. "No, Daddy. That bad man is going to visit me in my dreams again!" she cried. "I just know it!"

Severus looked at his daughter, pretending to be bored, and tired, when really he was shocked and seemingly interested.

"Don't be silly," Severus chastised. "There won't be a bad man visiting your dreams."

"Daddy, you don't understand!" she said indignantly. "Remember the bad dream I told you about in your classroom?" she stated. "That was when the bad man visited me. I don't want to see him again."

Severus finally understood what his daughter meant.

"It's okay," he assured her, "I won't let a bad man visit you," he said.

Liana looked unconvinced, but closed her eyes because she trusted her father.

"Good night," Severus placed a light kiss on her forehead.

He stood up from where he knelt and walked towards the door.

"I love you Daddy," Liana whispered.

Severus heard this, and turned around to face his daughter's bed. He stood there looking at his daughter for moment before answering, "I love you too, Sneaky Snake. Now sleep."

He closed the door, suppressing a sigh as he walked to his desk. Severus took out the sixth year papers on the properties of Salamander blood. Feeling the smooth coolness of the bottle of his red ink, he opened the cap and dipped his fine quill into it.

He immediately began scratching away at the first essay. His nerves grated at the atrocious grammar used by the student who wrote the essay. After editing and marking four essays he determined that he couldn't look at any other essays. They were absolutely horrible!

His eyes fell on a picture of his family...Hermione holding Liana as a baby and himself. They were smiling as they looked at their daughter. Draco had taken the picture and still hadn't stopped teasing him about smiling in the picture.

He closed his eyes and tried to forget her. He couldn't though, she was his love. His only love; his soul mate. Yet the fates had a different plan for him. They had ultimately decided that he could survive without her. He could not think of a worse scenario into which he had been placed. His wife dying, leaving him to raise their only child alone.

Not that he was complaining, really. He loved the girl. It was just that Liana looked so much like her mother.

He poured vodka into one of his crystal glasses, and moodily sat on his green leather couch. After Hermione's death, Severus had been the worst father in the world, at least in his opinion. He couldn't even look at his daughter for days! His own mother had to come into the school and snap him back to reality.

As much of a reality there was for Severus Snape anyway. No, he really didn't think there would ever be a reality for him. Life had been taken away from him the very moment his wife was taken away from him. The only one that mattered now was Liana. Severus knew that he had to stay alive for as long as he could now, if for no other reason than to watch his little girl grow up and get married to someone Severus knew he could trust.

Trust was a major issue for Severus Snape. One he had never truly learned to deal with, especially after the incident with James Potter and Sirius Black back when they were all students. Taking a bottle of vodka in his hands, he scrunched his nose in disgust at the thought of the *Marauders*. Snorting he poured the bottle of vodka, and watched as the alcoholic beverage trickled into the cup, making splattering noises once it hit the glass.

Those two reminded him of his father. The infamous Samuel Snape. Severus loathed his father; his father would always accuse his mother of doing the simply outrageous things! Severus remembered sitting in the drawing room of Snape Manor, and the two...Samuel Snape and Helene Ravenclaw (Snape)...would fight endlessly.

- - Flash Back - -

"You little whore!" Samuel growled as he stared at his pathetic excuse for a wife.

Helene refused to look offended at his accusation. "Do not use such language in front of my son."

"He's every bit as my son, as he is yours," Samuel sneered.

Helene straightened up slightly, dusting off the invisible dust on her robes.

Seven-year-old Severus sniffled slightly as his parents continued arguing. He hated it when they argued. His eyes widened though when he saw his father slap his mother across the face. Severus had had enough! He stood up with courage and hit his father in the side.

"Move out of the way, Severus," Samuel said harshly, as he pushed his son back onto the couch. His wife continued to swear and curse at him for being so impossible. Having heard enough of her high pitched voice, the abusive wizard smacked her down.

Severus watched with wide eyes, and, standing up, ran to his mother.

"Severus, do not interfere," Samuel stalked closer to the two. He pulled Helene up to her feet and pried Severus away from her. When Severus didn't move, Samuel pulled out his wand.

"Samuel!" Helene cried as her husband pushed her behind him. "No, please!"

"Shut up, woman," he sneered. He rounded on his son, who looked up at him with fearful eyes. "You are a pathetic excuse for a Snape." He raised his wand and pointed it at the young boy. "Crucio!"

- - End Flash Back - -

Severus could still remember the feeling of being put under the Cruciatus Curse by his own father.

He closed his eyes and opened them again. He saw an outlined silver figure, of what looked to be Hermione. He blinked again, to make sure that he wasn't hallucinating. Opening his eyes, he sighed in displeasure. He really was hallucinating.

- - -

Hermione breathed in a sigh of relief as she disappeared through the walls of the dungeons. She had almost been caught!

Closing her eyes, she opened them again. Looking down at her palms, the color of her complexion was the same: a silvery white, color.

Her throat felt incredibly parched. She really would fancy a cup of tea, though she knew it wouldn't happen. She wasn't able to consume anything. Being a ghost, she couldn't even touch anything.

Life was absolutely brilliant.

END CHAPTER ONE

Authoress Notes

What did you think? Hermione's a ghost, hmm.

m1s7ress

Chapter Two

Chapter 3 of 4

A look on Hermione's thoughts on past events.

Disclaimer: I don't own Harry Potter and co. They belong to JK ROWLING and her various publishers etc. I only have the privilege to toy and wreck the characters lives to

whatever I please. I find pleasure in doing just that.

Thanks to QueenP for betaing this chapter!

Recap

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End Recap

CHAPTER TWO

GHOST

Hermione Granger flew past the castle walls and didn't stop. Her unexpected flight ended as she landed in the secret garden that her husband had. This garden grew all the potion ingredients that he could plant. She smiled as she reminisced about the last time she and Severus had been there together. It had been during her pregnancy with Liana. Severus was getting potion ingredients that could aid her in having a pleasant pregnancy.

Hermione sighed; she bent down and tried to grasp a plant. It came as no surprise to her that her had slipped right through. She was almost beginning to regret the path she chose. The sign had warned her to use caution to select the tunnel to continue her journey.

Hermione had found herself in a cave that had three tunnels through which she could exit. The first was filled with a blue light, the next with bright white light, and the last was blocked. Hermione was sure that the sealed tunnel was the tunnel to the life she had just left. She was just as sure that the bright white light led to her death. Her feet, of their own accord, had taken her into the remaining path, the one with the blue light.

She was unashamedly afraid of death, yet what scared her more was existing without Severus and Liana. Her daughter and husband had meant everything to her; surely, as a ghost, she would be able to live with them forever?

When she had returned to Hogwarts, she quickly chose not to show herself to her husband. It appeared that he was capably caring for their daughter. His ability to do so filled her with pride.

She then met up with Dumbledore, the exchanged words between them were easily remembered. The information he had given her had hurt, yet she had agreed with the Headmaster that the current course of action was for the best.

- - -

Hermione Snape walked through the door of the Headmaster's office. The Ghost of Hufflepuff had summoned her stating Dumbledore had wanted to speak with her. While somewhat surprised that Dumbledore knew that she was in the castle, she realized that his intimate knowledge of Hogwarts would have allowed him, above all others, that information.

As she walked through the door, Hermione could feel herself shiver. She was still unaccustomed to this new ability as it didn't feel natural. She looked towards Dumbledore's office and found him sitting at his desk, sucking on a lemon drop.

"Albus," she called to him and smiled when the old man look up.

"Hermione," he said with a smile plastered on his face. "It's good to see you. Come in, come in."

Hermione walked towards Dumbledore and sat on one of the couches. While she still didn't understand how she could walk without falling through the floor or sit in a chair, she was content to know that she could.

"I am a bit disappointed that you didn't immediately come and say hello to me once you've arrived," Dumbledore said. "That is alright though."

Hermione nodded her head. "I am sorry, Albus, but I have been adjusting to my ghost body."

"Ah," the old man said, "I quite understand. Have you seen Severus yet?"

Hermione chewed on her bottom lip and didn't respond. She had been thinking of going to Severus and telling him that she had returned, if only in ghost form. She hadn't though. Why? The answer to that still eluded her.

"I haven't Albus."

Dumbledore nodded his head before leaning forward. "Might I make a suggestion?" he asked. When Hermione nodded her head in consent, he fell silent for a second.

"Hermione, I know it will be difficult for you to do, but you cannot go to Severus. You cannot tell him that you are here as a ghost. He is still trying to get over your death. It would be quite a shock for him to learn that you are a ghost. You know him better than most--he'll go into denial. He has finally decided to care for your daughter on a daily basis and is no longer shutting her out of his life. For you to come back suddenly would cause him to feel unnecessarily guilty, once again shutting himself off from everyone."

Hermione sat still, shocked by this news. She would never be able to talk to her husband again with this insane request from Dumbledore! She wouldn't be able to tell him that she still loved him and missed him. She wouldn't be able to tell her daughter that Mommy was still here.

"Wait. Did Dumbledore say that Severus could actually look at Liana now? Did that mean he could after I died?" Her mind was made up; she wouldn't tell Severus she was still here.

- - -

Hermione sighed for the umpteenth time that night. If only she hadn't picked that ruddy tunnel with the blue light. Then, she would really be dead as Severus and everyone

else believed her to be.

Though, if there was a good thing about her decision to come back as a ghost, it was that she could watch her daughter grow up. Her daughter looked more and more like her each and every day, despite the subtle differences. Liana had black curls, although not as bushy as her own had been. She had a cute, button nose and chocolate-brown eyes. She also inherited Hermione's love for books.

"Oh, Liana," Hermione muttered. "Mommy misses you ..."

- - -

Hermione watched as her husband scrunched his nose in disgust as he observed the second years attempt to make a potion. Even after they had married, he still was grouchy towards other people. But not as obnoxious and grouchy as he used to be, a huge surprise to those who knew him.

For years, everyone knew her husband as the obnoxious Potions Master of Hogwarts. Yet, the day that he and Hermione had announced to all that they were courting, everyone was shocked to the core. No one knew that the Potions Master was actually capable of love. They all believed him to be void of emotions, immune to love.

Hermione was shocked when Severus had proposed to her the evening before she graduated. She was always one to obey the rules, yet she couldn't resist the man named Severus Snape. Having a student/teacher relationship was banned from the school.

- - -

Hermione walked out onto the empty Hogwarts grounds. Tomorrow would be the day that she left Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry. She had dreamt of this day for the last seven years. She would give her speech as Head Girl, telling everyone in Seventh Year that she was extremely proud of them.

Yet, she didn't want to give the speech that she had worked so hard on. Actually, she was beginning to regret the speed with which time passed. She would be unable to see Severus Snape anymore. They hadn't talked about their future after she was to leave, having never felt the need to discuss it. If only they had, then she wouldn't be dwelling on it now.

There were so many questions running through her head. Would he still want to be with her even after school? How would her parents take this? Most important, how would Ron and Harry take to this news?

"Hermione."

Having jumped slightly when she heard her name called, Hermione turned to face the same person who currently occupied her thoughts. She smiled and spread her arms out towards him. The man walked towards her, quietly embracing the young witch. She could feel his breath against her neck, and his nose was nuzzled into her brown curls.

"What were you thinking about?" he asked her.

Hermione pulled away from him and took his hand. She led him towards the edge of the Forbidden Forest, where they both sat down...he leaning against a tree and she sitting between his extended legs..

"The future," she responded quietly. *She didn't meet his eyes, looking instead toward the brightly burning stars. "What will happen after I leave..."*

Hermione felt her stomach grumble, she looked towards the man beside her. He smirked at her, and then shook his head. "You haven't eaten yet, have you?"

The girl shook her head sheepishly. "Now that you've mentioned it, I don't think I've eaten since lunch."

"You should eat you know," he told her. "It isn't healthy for you."

"Oh, would you quit talking about my health for the moment? It really isn't the time."

"Oh?" he said in amusement. "Prey tell when will be the time?"

She didn't answer though. Hermione took his hand, and leaned back to rest on him. With his hand in hers, she encircled it around her waist. Hermione leaned her head down, so that it was resting on his broad shoulders. The man took his free hand and rested it on her belly.

They were looking at the stars; his question lay forgotten amongst them.

"Hermione," he suddenly called, disrupting the comfortable silence between them.

"Hm?"

"May I ask you something?"

"Sure," she responded, honey brown eyes looked towards him.

"You know how I've felt about these emotions, and how they're new to me?" At her nod, he sat up, looking her in the eye. His expression showed nothing. His body language showed nothing, making Hermione very uncomfortable.

Was he going to say that he didn't want to continue this relationship with her any longer?

"Is there something wrong, Severus?"

Severus shook his head, and took one of her small hands into his big ones. "I've discovered myself to be quite fond of you, Hermione Granger. You've stirred so many emotions in me which I've never thought I'd ever feel. I had always thought that I would continue to live my life as a grouchy old Professor. I could never picture myself with someone. I could have never believe I would actually want to share my life with anyone else."

"I always thought that I would be forever lonely. Quite frankly, I was okay with that until you came into my life. At first, I thought these odd emotions would leave me at some point. As the months passed, I came to realize that I wouldn't be able to remain alone any longer. You gave me something to live for, to look forward to. You, Hermione Granger, are my life. To say that I didn't care about you was an understatement. I want to tell you something, but... it's going to take a while for me to get it out right."

Hermione had tears streaming down her cheeks. She urged him to continue. He sat silent for a few seconds, looking at his hands, which were holding on tightly to hers. It seemed like he was contemplating something very important.

"Severus?"

The man didn't answer immediately; he continued to look at her hands, particularly the left one. He started stroking each finger, stopping when he reached his goal, causing Hermione's eyes to widen

"Tell me, Hermione," he said in a voice that made her shudder. He had never spoken to her in that tone of voice. It sounded so soft, so sweet, so caring.

"Anything."

"If I tell you something, something that I've never told anyone else in my entire life, would you accept me for who I am?" Hermione didn't need to respond to that question. "I love you, Hermione Granger," he whispered. He said it with such great relief that an unexpected smile broke out on his face. He seemed happy and, full of life. "Will you marry me?"

"Yes!" Hermione cried in joy, the first word she had spoken throughout his entire speech. She pounced on him, and kissed him fully.

- - -

Hermione sat wistfully on her husband's desk while he was criticizing a student's potion, none too pleased with the way it turned out. Some things never change, and Hermione wouldn't have it any other way. The bell rang, and the students hurried out of the classroom. Hermione remembered herself as one of those students, rushing from the room as quickly as possible.

Usually Liana would've come rushing out of Severus' personal quarters to sit with her father. Yet, she hadn't come. Perhaps one of her friends was on duty, taking care of Liana.

Severus waved his wand in the air, the door closing with a loud bang. He waved it again, and music flowed through the room. Hermione recognized it to be a Muggle tune, one of her favourite songs.

Severus poured himself a brandy, and sighed loudly as he let the liquor seep down his throat. Hermione looked on, filled with guilt. She wanted to wrap her arms around him, yet she knew she couldn't. Her arms would simply go right through him. There was no point in setting herself up for heartbreak.

You're the only one who really knew me at all. That particular line stuck out in Hermione's mind. She really was the only one who knew Severus.

"I love you, Severus," Hermione whispered. She allowed an illusion of herself to momentarily appear before vanishing out of sight again. She was still in the room where Severus currently sat. He was looking straight at her. Well, what he thought to be her.

"Hermione?"

END CHAPTER TWO

Chapter Three

Chapter 4 of 4

Samuel Snape finds out that his son is married and has a granddaughter. Helene Snape doesn't want Samuel to find the little girl. Liana has a fit of her own, which causes Hermione's heart to break.

Disclaimer: I don't own HARRY POTTER and co. We all know that they belong to the fabulous, J.K. ROWLING. Any characters that are familiarized with any of her books don't belong to me.

Thanks to QueenP and Magic for betaing this chapter.

Recap

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"Hermione?"

End Recap

CHAPTER THREE

BABY DON'T CRY

Severus blinked several times. He was quite sure Hermione had just appeared before him, having told him that she still loved him. Rising from his chair, he slowly walked to where he had seen her. He stretched out his hand, hoping to grab onto something. What? He didn't know.

"Hermione?" he repeated again.

When he had gotten no response his eyelids slowly slid over his eyes. Severus breathed in deeply before opening them once more. His imagination had definitely run away with him that time; either that or he was starting to go insane.

He slammed his fist against the mahogany desk in frustration. Severus willed the tears to not fall yet again as he squeezed his eyes tightly. He was broken, completely broken, and there was no possible way to repair his damage. For three eternally long years, he had tried to get over the pain caused by his young wife's death. It was to no avail. The pain remained without fail.

Failure. He, Severus Snape, was a failure--failing in his attempts to move past his wife's death. He still loved her; there was no doubt in his mind about that. She was the only woman he had ever loved. She was the one who had taught him how to love, and that loving wasn't all that bad.

Then, what did the bloody witch go and do? She had gotten herself a *Crucio* from that bloody idiot Karkaroff. If only he had been there to help her. If he had only ... she wouldn't be ...

Shaking his limp head, Severus slammed his other fist onto the desk. The tears were ignoring his commands to stop. His heart hammered in his chest, leaving him feeling as if his ribcage would burst apart at any second. He waited, holding his breath slightly. After a few minutes passed, his heart started beating normally.

Although his ribcage didn't break, his heart did, breaking all over again, at every thought of Hermione.

Severus had wondered what his heart would look like. He had always assumed that it was black and cold. Black ice basically. Then along came Miss Hermione Granger. The insolent, little wench had thawed his cold heart of black ice into a steady- beating, blood red heart. The heart overflowed with love for her and also for his daughter.

Severus gripped his black robes roughly; his fingers entwined into the material. This place, this place was where his heart was currently beating. Correction: Where his heart was slowly beating. Why so slowly? His heart wasn't functioning properly because it was missing something--something very important.

It was Hermione's love. Snape snorted. Hermione's love and affection, indeed. What had he turned into? An ex-Death Eater, and ex-spy for the Light... Now what was he?

I'll tell you what I am, he thought bitterly. I'm a fool.

- - -

Dumbledore paced his study in deep thought. As usual, his thoughts were revolving around something that had little to do with him. This time his thoughts were about Severus and Liana.

If the two were to discover Hermione had become a ghost ... what would happen would be anyone's guess. Severus would either be elated that his wife had returned to him, or he'd be outraged that she had returned without informing him. Of course, the headmaster was inclined to believe the latter would happen rather than the former.

But then again, who really knew? Severus was an enigma, even to himself.

Albus was sure that the younger wizard had never gotten over his wife's death, the poor man. The old wizard walked to his desk and sat in his old, worn out chair.

Dumbledore sighed, leaning against the chair. There were no major concerns any longer. With the threat of Voldemort gone, the Wizarding world was at peace--whatever bit of peace was left. Shaking his head in order to clear his mind of such a depressing memory, his thoughts wandered back to his Potions professor.

The Second War had an impact on Professor Snape as well. Walter Crabbe, Vincent Crabbe's father, had kidnapped Hermione after the Leaving Ceremony. Dumbledore remembered that memory as if it were yesterday...

- - -

Dumbledore walked into his study at a slow pace. Once reaching his desk, he sat down with a huge sigh of relief. He had just left the confinements of the Great Hall, in which the party following the Leaving Ceremony was taking place. He was far too old to continue partying with the rest of his students and fellow staff members. His old bones needed rest, something that he had been neglecting ever since Voldemort's return.

Now that Voldemort was keeping his visibility down for a while, he had a short period of time in which to rest. Slowly, his wrinkled eyelids slid over his blue eyes and sleep quickly took hold of the old wizard. Only a second after sleep had consumed him, the door to his office banged open. The old man awoke with a start, his eyes searching his room, looking for the person who had disturbed his much needed rest.

Seeing his Potions professor standing in the doorway, he slowly rose from his leather chair.

"Severus," Dumbledore said, sleep still in his voice. "Is there a problem?"

"Albus, Miss Granger is missing."

"Ah, but where is Minerva?" Dumbledore asked, walking toward the door. "Shouldn't she be concerned about the whereabouts of the students in her own house, hm?"

Dumbledore watched as Snape's face hardened at the headmaster's words. Raising an eyebrow slightly, Dumbledore now stood in front of his Potions Professor.

"Severus, could she simply be in the Head Rooms?"

"Mister Boots has already checked the Head Rooms for her, Albus." Snape's patience seemed to be wearing thin. "Apparently, she was not there, and she hasn't entered Gryffindor Tower either. I'm afraid Potter and Weasley are getting their knickers in a twist."

"I see," Dumbledore said. "I want a search party underway for Miss Granger."

"There is another thing, Headmaster," Severus said. "Walter Crabbe is also missing from this evening's festivities." Severus sighed and ran a hand over his tired face. "He went missing around the same time that Miss Granger did."

Wasting no time, Dumbledore waved his wand, and a Phoenix floated out of it. "Let us depart to find Miss Granger and Mister Crabbe."

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The headmaster sighed wearily. What happened next was nothing less than a tragedy. As was discovered later, Walter Crabbe had indeed kidnapped Hermione. In addition to taking the young witch, he discovered she was pregnant--a surprise to not only the captor, but also the captive.

Being the foolish man that he was, Crabbe had killed the baby without thought as to it displeasing his Lord. After finding out what had been done, Voldemort was enraged and had disposed of Mister Crabbe in a matter of moments. Hermione had eventually managed to escape the Crabbe household, thanks to a certain Mister Malfoy, allowing the young wizard to redeem himself by proving his loyalty to the Order.

Dumbledore was most pleased to see that the young man had chosen the most fitting way of redeeming himself. Yet, when the Order had discovered what Walter Crabbe had done to Hermione, they were furious. No one had known of Hermione's pregnancy. Dumbledore vividly remembered the look on the Potions professor's face as Draco had told the Order all that had transpired.

It was a look of anger, hurt, and to this day, an emotion that he could not completely place. While he could only suspect who fathered Hermione's child, he saw no reason

to punish them any further for their actions. They had already suffered enough, and Miss Granger had already graduated; so no harm was done.

After being a prisoner of Walter Crabbe for four years, a lot had happened to Miss Granger. Dumbledore was upset that an asset to the Order had been kidnapped and that there was nothing to be done about it. The dungeon under the Crabbe household had been watched, even after Walter Crabbe had passed away. The Death Eaters prevented any possibility of Hermione escaping of her own accord.

When Draco had brought her to Hogwarts on that Halloween Night, she looked so frail. It was a sight to see. The once spirited, ambitious Gryffindor girl was broken through and through after four years of torture by Crabbe. The next thing he knew, the final battle of the second war had begun. Through much insistence on Miss Granger's part, she had participated in the final battle. He did notice that his Potions master had remained near her at all times. It didn't take an idiot to figure out that those two were ... together.

Getting up from his seat, he strode to his personal quarters, hoping to get some of that much needed rest once there.

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Samuel Snape walked to the manor where his wife now resided. It was amusing to him when that fool Fudge actually allowed he and Helene to separate. No matter what, though, she'd still be *his* wife, and he had expressed that to the Minister. He didn't really think that the old fool really knew what he meant by that, but whatever, so long as Helene was still his wife nothing else really mattered.

Arriving at the front door of the manor, he knocked, making his presence known. He waited impatiently, frowning at the door. He didn't appreciate the fact that they were intentionally making him wait. Finally, after what seemed like several hours, the door opened with a slight creak, and a house-elf poked out his little head, large eyes widening upon seeing Samuel Snape.

"What is Isis to be doing for you, sir?" the house-elf questioned with a squeak in its voice.

"You know what I want, you stupid house-elf," sneered Samuel. "Where is Helene?"

The house-elf gulped loudly. "Mistress is telling us that she is not to be disturbed today. Isis is sticking to Mistress' order, Isis is. Sir is to be coming back next time."

Samuel raised an eyebrow before sneering once again. "Don't stand there looking at me like that, house-elf. Tell your mistress that she can stop whatever it is that she's doing and come see me at once!"

Isis' legs trembled with fear. Yet, it was determined to obey its mistress despite what this man said.

"Isis is sorry, sir. Mistress says no!"

The house-elf was slowly testing his patience, and he didn't like that one bit. Instead of bending down to talk to the insolent house-elf, he stood at his full height, towering over the poor creature.

"Go call Helene. Tell her that her husband needs to speak to her right now."

"Isis is sorry, but that cannot be done. Come back again tomorrow, sir." With that said, the house-elf forcefully pushed the door closed. Unfortunately for the creature, Snape had, in return, pushed the door open, permitting himself entry.

"OUT!" screeched the house-elf at the top of its lungs.

Samuel paid no heed to the house-elf, settling himself, instead, in a nearby chair.

"What is going on here?" A woman appeared at the doors leading into another room. Her gaze settled on her house-elf and then moved to the man sitting on the chair.

"Samuel, what is the meaning of this interruption?" Helene questioned, giving her husband a steely glare.

"Helene, love, I came by to see if we could have a little chat?" Samuel said, a smirk appearing on his face.

"What do you mean, Samuel?"

Raising an eyebrow, the man rose from the chair and walked toward his wife. "I was hoping that we could have a civilized conversation, but that appears to be out of the question," he said as he now stood in front of her.

"It always has been out of the question, Samuel Snape. Please, tell me what you want so that you can leave of my home as quickly as possible!"

"You know, my dear, I was over at Lucius Malfoy's house today. He was on his death bed, poor bloke," he said as he walked around his wife, enjoying the shudder that traveled down her back.

"Is that so?"

"Yes, and in fact, I found out some very interesting news about our son, Severus, from Lucius." Samuel was eyeing his wife, seeing if there were any movements from her that would signal that she knew what he was talking about. "You see, dear wife, he told me that Severus had gotten married. And do you know to whom he got married, hm? A Mudblood! A filthy, little Mudblood!" His voice was escalating rapidly now, expressing his intense anger at the idea. "And do you know what else I found out, Helene? He has a daughter. A Miss Liana Snape."

Helene's eyes widened a fraction at the mention of her granddaughter. She was hoping and praying to Merlin that her husband would never find out about Liana. Unfortunately, he now had.

"Really now?" she said, pretending to be unaffected with what Samuel had just said. "I had no idea that Severus..."

"Lies!" hissed Samuel as he stopped walking, and now stood directly in front of his wife. "All lies, Helene."

"Samuel, I honestly do not know what you are talking about," Helene said sternly. "If that is all you wish to speak to me about, I suggest you go back home. Your business with me is done, and has been for a long time."

"If that is the way you're are going to be. But I still don't believe you, Helene," he said. "I'll find my granddaughter for myself."

Helene Snape watched as her husband left her house. Walking over to one of the windows in the foyer, she peered through it. Her heart beat faster than ever. It had taken her so long to convince Severus to let her see her granddaughter, Liana. She would be damned if she would let that cruel man see the precious little girl. No, that would never, could never happen. As long as she was Severus' mother, she would do everything in her power to see to it that her granddaughter would never have to meet Samuel Snape.

Hurriedly walking over to the fireplace, she threw in some Floo powder. The flames turned emerald, and Helene shouted, "Headmaster's office, Hogwarts." Sticking her head into the flames, she looked around the room.

"Albus?" she called out to the empty room. Hearing the door shut quietly, she swiveled her head around to face an old, wrinkled man. His white-silver hair hanging over his

shoulders, and his twinkling, blue eyes behind half-mooned spectacles turned to look at her.

"Helene, what a surprise to see you," the old man said, a small smile forming on his lips.

The woman smiled slightly. "Yes, I suppose it is," she replied.

"Is there something you wish to discuss?" asked Dumbledore as he sat in his worn-out leather chair.

"Yes. I just received quite a shock." Helene shook her head, breathing deeply before continuing. "He knows, Albus."

"Who knows?"

"Samuel. Samuel knows Albus! He knows about Liana!" her voice trembled, her fear evident as she looked into the eyes of the headmaster. "I'm afraid what will happen if he finds her. We know that he'll come to Hogwarts. It's widely known that Severus is still teaching there."

"I see," he said quietly. "We'll have to inform Severus, then."

"Please," said Helene quietly. "I know that Severus... ignored his father ...majority of his life, I just hope ... Albus, I wouldn't know... what to do if something ..."

The headmaster walked over to the fireplace and gave the old woman a reassuring look. "We'll find a way."

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Severus walked into his personal quarters, a frown marring his face. He had just come from an impromptu meeting with Dumbledore. The news that Dumbledore had presented was *not* what he had expected to hear. His father knew about Liana. Severus had spent much time and effort in order to prevent his father from finding out about his daughter. Merlin, he was frightened for his little girl. Apparently, his father had gone to visit his poor mother.

He needed to contact her. He needed to know how his father had obtained such information. His eyes swooped over the room; his daughter wasn't here yet. Assuming that she was still with Ginevra Malfoy, Severus sat at his desk and ran a hand over his tired face, sighing.

Determining that he needed to owl his mother to ask for details on how his father had found out about Liana, he reached for a piece of parchment. As the rough texture of the parchment rubbed between his finger pads, he grabbed a quill. After dipping the fine tipped writing utensil into black ink, he placed it on the piece of parchment, rapidly firing off questions for his mother. His anger grew as he wrote until his head felt as though it were spinning.

He couldn't even begin to think about his father's actions if the older man ever found Liana. His head lifted as he heard noise coming from the outside. Listening closely, he heard someone, a little girl, complaining. A small smile formed on his lips. It was Liana complaining to the Weasley girl about something.

Sliding his chair back, he stood up and walked towards the door. Opening it, he watched as his daughter's frown left her face, and a huge, bright smile replaced it. The little girl lunged forward, hugging her father's legs tightly. A pregnant woman walked slowly behind her.

"Professor Snape," the woman said in relief. "Would you mind if I Floo back to my rooms from here? My legs hurt from all the stairs."

"Of course, Ginevra," Severus replied as he made room for the very pregnant woman to come in. "Why you chose to walk down to the dungeons in the first place is a mystery to me."

Ginny grinned and waddled across the room to the fireplace. "Ana wanted to walk down here. She's as stubborn as Hermione," the redhead said shaking her head.

Severus nodded, not responding to what she had said. "Thank you for watching her," he said.

"It was no problem, Professor."

She threw a handful of Floo powder into the fireplace and walked into it as she stated her destination. Sighing slightly, Snape closed the door. Sometime during his conversation with Draco's wife, Liana had left the room. Knowing that she had gone to her room, he set about finishing his previous task. Before reaching his desk, though, he heard quiet sobs coming from his daughter's room.

Frowning slightly, he walked to her room. The door was slightly ajar, and, as he peered in through the crack in the door, he saw his little girl face-down on her bed crying.

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Hermione frowned at the scene before her. Her husband had just walked into their daughter's room to find the little girl crying on her bed. She stayed against the wall, ensuring that at least a part of her body was touching it. If she failed to touch a solid object, she would become visible to the room's occupants.

"Liana, what is the matter?" asked Severus as he sat next to the little girl on the bed.

The little girl looked up at her father and threw herself at him. Shocked at what his daughter had just done, Severus patted her softly on the back. After a while, he carefully pried her away from him and asked, again, why she was crying.

"Why don't I have a mum?" Liana cried, her shoulders shaking.

Astonished at the sudden declaration, Severus tried to grasp what his daughter was asking. "Liana, you have a mother, remember?" he said. Severus pointed to the picture on the little girls table.

"Why isn't...hic... she here then?" Liana asked, hiccupping through her tears.

Resisting the urge to sigh, Severus pulled the sobbing girl into his lap. "I thought we had discussed this already."

The little girl shrugged.

Meanwhile, Hermione was watching the interaction from afar. The ghost witch clutched her heart in agony. She so badly wanted to reach out to her daughter and tell her that Mummy was here. That she really hadn't left.

"Liana, why have you started crying about this nonsense? Even after we have discussed this topic countless times before."

Once again the little girl shrugged her shoulders.

"Liana, I want an answer this instant," said Severus in a firm voice.

"Patty and Tim went over to Auntie Ginny's while I was over," Liana said. Severus nodded his head, urging her to continue. "We were baking, y'know the thing Nana and I do while I'm over there. And then, while we were making cookies, Patty and Tim started talking about their mums, Katie and Fleur. Then Tim asked me what Mum did, and I didn't know what to say."

Severus held his daughter tight against him, not knowing what to say. Bill and George's brats should've kept their mouths shut. He really didn't know how to handle this.

Running his fingers through his daughter's hair, whispering into her ear, "It's going to be okay, Sneaky Snake."

Hermione watched with tears in her eyes. She so badly wanted to comfort her daughter, but she was held back. She knew she couldn't do so and pain of that knowledge was killing her.

"Daddy?" the little girl said after calming down. "Will Mum ever come back to us?"

Severus took in a deep breath, and gave his daughter a heartbroken smile. "I don't think so, Sneaky."

"Why not?" Liana demanded, her small fists clenching in anger. "I've been a good girl, haven't I, daddy? I always make my Christmas list short and always put my mum as the number one thing on my list. So that Father Christmas would know that Mum was the only present that I wanted."

"Your mother is dead, Liana," Severus said, albeit too harshly as tears started to form in the little girl's eyes. "There is no possible way to bring her back."

Hermione covered her mouth, tears flowing down her cheeks. Leaning back against the wall, she fell through to the other side. Looking at her surroundings, she saw that she was now in the Ghosts' quarters. Shaking her head, she walked into her room with Severus' words spinning in her head.

There is no possible way to bring her back.

END CHAPTER THREE

"Baby don't cry, you've got to keep your head up." - Baby Don't Cry by Tupac Shakur
