

Silent Threshold

by LaiksMarei

Hermione treks down to the dungeons to see just where things stand between her and Snape. Will he continue to ignore her, or will he end her agony and heal her heart?

Silent Threshold

Chapter 1 of 1

Hermione treks down to the dungeons to see just where things stand between her and Snape. Will he continue to ignore her, or will he end her agony and heal her heart?

Disclaimer: I am not now, nor have I ever been, mistaken as J. K. Rowling. These are her characters entirely. I'm just having my wicked way with them.

LM's Notes: I would like to take a moment and thank DeeMichelle, Jane Average and lilywillow. Each of these wonderful ladies was tireless in their efforts to guide me through the writing process and all fun stuff that comes with revision. I swear they should each get a medal for putting up with me. Any mistakes found within are entirely mine.

Hermione had once again been knocking on his door for what seemed like hours, all to no avail. She knew he was cloistered in his chambers thanks to Harry's Marauder's Map, yet he refused to acknowledge her presence. He had to have known the moment she arrived; the wards should have signaled him immediately. Besides, it was not as if this was the first time she had made this type of journey to the deep, shadowy dungeons. Oh yes, Hermione had certainly been in this exact position before, but the approach had always been different. Up until tonight she had tried everything from the direct method to a feeble attempt at Slytherin cunning, all with the same results – continued silence.

As time ticked on, it was becoming all too apparent that Severus Tobias Snape did not intend to acquiesce to her request to gain entry – no matter how long she stood in the corridor, nor how much she pleaded. She would have screamed bloody murder to get his attention, to elicit even the most minute of responses, if she thought it would work. Although, deep down she knew better and realized that those dramatics would only serve to alert every occupant of Hogwarts that she was somewhere she shouldn't be, standing at the entrance of the abyss, hoping to gain access to what was considered by most to be completely and utterly forbidden.

Damn this stubborn man, she mused wearily as she began to pace back and forth in front of the barrier that separated her from him. *Why does everything have to be so difficult, so push-pull with him? For once, why couldn't he just accept the natural progression of things, take them as they were instead of trying to dissect, categorize, label, cross-reference, chart, graph and over-analyze every single word or action, thus of course coming to the worst possible conclusion?*

He fears being rejected and humiliated above all, Hermione Remus' words from a few weeks ago reminded her. She gave a mental snort as she recalled the conversation she had shared with him at Grimmauld Place. The two of them had been waxing poetic about the wizarding world's newly found freedom from the Dark Lord, possible career paths and love, if you could imagine that, when the focus of their tête-à-tête turned toward the dark, sarcastic man. She found herself surprised by the amount of insight and encouragement she received from Remus where Severus was concerned. Never in a million years did she expect to gain approval or understanding from anyone, let alone Severus' childhood nemesis, on her feelings for him.

Suddenly, as if a spark had illuminated the back of her mind, she stopped her marching and turned to face the door again. She pressed her body fully against the wood and

sighed. Gathering all her Gryffindor courage, she slowly began to voice the words she thought he needed to hear.

"I know you're in there, Severus. I know that you can hear me. I'm waiting here, laid bare for you to see. There is darkness above me and stone under my feet. There is almost nothing in between, except a profound emptiness and an aching need that fills this ever-growing space. I feel as though I've been left to twist away in this mocking silence. Please don't abandon me now, not when we've come this far."

She strained her ears and listened for the slightest sound, some indication that he had heard her declaration. When nothing came, the voice in the back of her mind gave her a gentle prod. *This is your last hope. If this doesn't get through to him, then nothing will.* Since her determination had yet to falter completely, she made a quick plea to the gods, took one last leap of faith and began again, nervous and unsure of her voice.

"Should I continue to stand here and call to you? Should I get on my hands and knees to reach out and beg? I'm really at a loss, and I need some guidance, some sort of sign. It feels like I am chasing shadows, a hopeless dream. Please let me in because I'm out, out for you to see. My pride is gone and I would gladly strip away the remnants of my dignity if that is what it takes. I know, deep down in my heart of hearts, that I am someone to you, though I realize you haven't exactly said I am."

Again, she waited as her heart lodged into her throat. Her palms were slick with sweat as she ran them over the rough grain of the door. Just as before, her words met with cruel silence.

Hot, salty tears streamed down her cheeks. Willing herself to cling to the entrance no longer, Hermione exhaled deeply and took a step backward. In a manner that resembled someone most defeated, she murmured to no one in particular, "I've been tossed aside, thrown away, as if everything that happened between us meant nothing."

Hermione spun on her heel as she roughly scrubbed the wetness from her face with her sleeve. Placing one foot in front of the other, she began to make what felt like the walk of shame back to her common room. She had not taken more than a few steps when she felt the distinct dismantling of magic, followed by a metallic click and a rush of cool air. She stopped and turned as if to assure herself that she wasn't imagining things.

Severus hesitantly stepped into corridor with his head slightly bowed. He waited a moment before he looked up, liquid midnight meeting the softest of brown.

"Never, Hermione," he said extending his arm and opening his hand with a motion for her to take it. "Please," he murmured in a voice that, while reminiscent of the deepest velvet, seemed to be tinged with a hint of fear.

His quiet plea was all Hermione needed to hear; she rushed to close the distance between them and bypassed his outstretched hand in favor of throwing her arms around him. He quickly brought his arms around to engulf her body, as if to reassure both of them, and guided her into his chambers. When they passed beyond the threshold, she silently thanked the deities above for answering her prayer.

Even though she knew it would be some time before the particulars of what was between them could truly be defined, Hermione was hopeful that all would be well in the end. He would be hers, and she would be his: her Severus to his Hermione.