Forever, Hermione

by ancientgirl

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Chapter 1

Chapter 1 of 1

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First let me apologize. I swore up and down never to write an angst story, yet here it is. But, in my own defense I have to say that I was inspired.

Marquise and I were discussing something she was drawing, and when she was telling me about it I was inspired to write this. You can see the picture along with this story as well on my lj.

All canon characters belong to JKR. Thank you for my wonderful beta June for her help with the technicalities of this story.

Forever, Hermione.

The battle had been going on for nearly seven hours. Hermione had been awakened that morning by Ginny, who had seen the smoke coming in from the distance. Hundreds of Death Eaters had descended on the grounds of Hogwarts as the fighting spilled over from Hogsmeade to the steps of the school.

She had barely had enough time to get dressed and run down to the Great Hall where Dumbledore was laying out the battle plan. Harry would be near him at all times. The rest of the sixth and seventh year students were paired off with an Auror or a member of the Order.

She had been paired with George Weasley, who by this time was a member of the Order along with his twin, Fred. Once outside they fought alongside one another until they became separated. She fought alone for several hours, not wanting to think of why George had not returned. As she fought, she tried to concentrate on her fighting, but she also kept a close eye out for any signs of Professor Snape. At one point she thought she saw him, then turned to block a Slicing Hex only to have him disappear from her sight.

After another hour of fighting, she miscalculated a movement on the part of Theodore Nott and was hit. She quickly regained her footing and sent a Bone Melting Hex his way. As Knott fell to his knees, she looked around once more. She caught sight of Snape only to see him fall at the hands of Lucius Malfoy.

She looked down at her side and knew she was mortally wounded. She could feel her insides burning; every breath she took felt like a fire igniting in her lungs. She walked quickly and held up her wand. It did not matter to her that she was about to cast an Unforgivable; it did not matter to her in the least.

As Lucius drew closer to Severus' unmoving body, she said the words,*"Avada Kedavra."* Lucius fell in a heap next to Severus. Dropping to her knees, she felt her wound now begin to bleed heavily.

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Severus opened his eyes. Around him he could hear both the cries of the dying and the laughter of the Death Eaters. He had been hit by a fatal curse; he did not know which curse it was, only that he could feel the life leaving his body. He had felt several bones shatter when he fell to the ground. He knew he was bleeding internally and

that no amount of medi-wizardry would bring him back from this. He turned his head slightly and smiled. He would die, but at least he knew that Voldemort had gone before he did.

She felt like she had crawled for miles, but at last she reached him. She had enough strength to pull him to a large tree. She leaned against the tree and gathered him in her arms. As she did, he moaned loudly ... or was it her? At this point she did not know.

"Severus?" she asked, wondering if he would hear her above the noise all around them. "Severus," she said once more as she leaned her head closer to his.

He moved his head slightly towards her.

"Miss Granger," he said with difficulty. "Leave me. Go and help the others; I am... too far gone for anyone's help." He saw her face, smudged with dirt and freshly fallen tears. She was his one regret above all the regrets he had had in his life. How he would have loved to have made her his wife ... to have awakened every day of his life to her innocent face, to have held their children in his arms as they came into this world. But that would never happen now.

He didn't want her to see him like this, weak and dying. He wanted to have her face in his mind when he died, but he could not have her near him. If she was near then his spirit would never leave her side, and he could not bear spending eternity watching her with another man.

"What have they done to you?" she asked, as her trembling hand now brushed the hair that had fallen across his face.

"It would be easier to tell you what they did not do to me. You are vulnerable here next to me. Go and find someplace safe."

"No, I want to be here with you."

"Dammit, girl. Listen to me for once in your life!" He felt her cool hand on his cheek and could not hold back the impulse to lean into her touch. "Leave! There is nothing anyone can do for me. Go and help someone who will benefit from it."

"I...I will not leave you," she said with as firm a voice as she could muster at that moment. She saw him shake his head slightly at her stubbornness. "What happened, Severus? What did they do to you?"

"I was fighting the Dark Lord. I sent an Unforgivable his way, but then Lucius distracted me. I did hit him, didn't I?" He looked into her worried brown eyes, which were quickly fading. He knew it would not be long for her unless she got help.

"Yes, you got him, Severus." She lied. Last she had seen them, Harry was fighting Voldemort and winning. She could not bring herself to tell Severus that it wasn't he who had killed Voldemort. "You have saved us all." At this she saw the first real smile she had ever seen from him.

"Then you must go. Find your friends and leave me here." He coughed and shoved her away slightly. "Go, Hermione. There is not long left for me. Please, leave me to die in peace."

She shook her head, refusing to relinquish her hold on him.

"Please, Hermione. I do not want you to watch me die." His voice broke, and he felt a tear escape his eye.

She held his gaze, feeling that he would die any moment.

"I have crawled over the bodies of my friends and enemies to be here with you. I cannot move an inch more. I'm dying as well, Severus. Please let me be with you, even if it's just for a short time."

He looked to her and felt his heart would now truly burst. How could she be dying? She had been the light in his darkness for so long. It was her voice he heard in his dreams, calling to him, whispering words of love in his darkest moments. And now she was dying. Knowing that they would not have long, he used his last bit of strength to pull her closer to him. He moaned painfully. He would be dead soon and so would she. He had lived a difficult life, and he had participated in many atrocities. Surely he would not be going to the same place in the hereafter as she.

"I had hoped some day, after all of this was over, to tell you," he said as he stroked her face, "how I wished for you to be my wife and have my children."

Hermione grabbed his head and held it close to hers. She placed her hand on his neck and began to sob quietly as she felt his pulse now slowing.

"Could you have loved me, Hermione?" he whispered.

"I do love you," she whispered in his ear then looked into his dark eyes. "Forever, Severus, forever." She kissed him and felt the movements of his lips as he murmured his final words to her.

"How I wish I had met you sooner in my life, Hermione." His grip on her forearms relaxed, and she knew he was gone.

"Wait for me, Severus," she sobbed. "Please, wait for me." She pulled him close to her body and held him tightly against her. She knew she was not far away from him now. Just a little longer, and she would find him again.

The battle finally ended shortly before sunset. Harry and Ron, along with Albus and Remus, found the bodies of Severus and Hermione with their arms entwined. They decided unanimously to bury their friends alongside of each other, guessing that the last words spoken between them must have been those of love and devotion. Harry knew of Hermione's feelings for their former professor, and ... as much as he was loath to admit it ... Severus had come through for the Order in the end. The Potions Master was a man of his word and gave his life for the cause. If he did not deserve her in life, then surely he deserved her in death.

Their graves were the first ones to be made and have gravestones set upon. Their rites were followed by several more days of funerals. Ten days after the final battle and the burial of Severus and Hermione, the last funeral was held on the grounds of Hogwarts. No one noticed two shadowy figures in the distance holding hands, walking away from the graves of Severus and Hermione.

As the mourners walked away from the graveyard, one person stopped and looked into the distance.

"What's wrong, Harry?" asked Ron.

Harry smiled. "Nothing, I just thought I saw something."

The two figures walked towards the forest and looked at each other.

"Where shall we go?" asked the woman.

"Anywhere and everywhere, love," said the man.

"Together, Severus?"

"Forever, Hermione."

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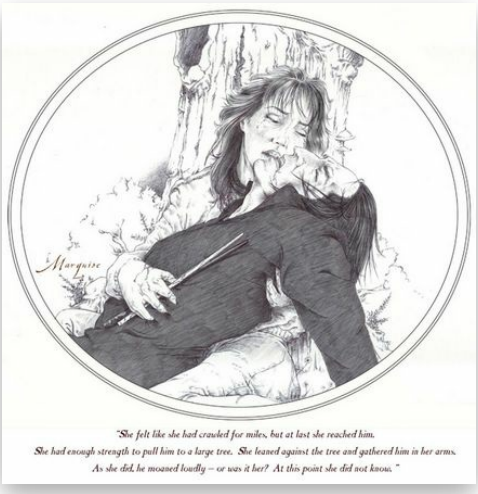
There it is. I did give them a happy ending so it's not too bad.

Here is the lovely drawing that Marquise made, which inspired me to write this.