

And They Lived

by SS Lupin

Ron wants to be Hermione's knight in shining armor. One-shot.

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Chapter 1 of 1

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The blackness started at her right hand.

Ron wasn't even sure if it was black... it was more like a sickly dark shade of gray that could not even decide its true color, only certain that it was spreading from her bluish-green veins and working its way up her arm.

Hermione had a tight smile on her face, pale and sweaty in the magicked light streaming through the hospital windows. She was to be transferred soon, Ron's dad had told him before he went in. The Healers couldn't do anything else, and it would give Hermione's parents some relief in finding help from the Muggle doctors. Like one of Snape's deathly concoctions could be compared to a simple poison.

"Ron, why are you frowning like that?"

Ron wanted to reply with, "What do you think? You're dying and I can't fucking save you," but it wasn't like she was healthy and they could argue their way into hugs and kisses.

"Even if they can't find something, we have—"

"Don't." Ron rubbed at his eyes. "Don't say that."

Her bottom lip trembled. It was white and chapped. "You will move on, love. Become an Auror, meet a nice girl... I hear Padma Patil is single."

"You can't make jokes when—"

"I'm dying?"

"No, that's not what—"

"I'm dying, Ron." Hermione held up a hand to Ron's face – her left – and cupped his chin. "I'm dying," she repeated, as if Ron would actually believe it, "and I want you to be happy."

Ron shook his head. His breathing felt heavy and words could not get past his throat.

"You'll grieve, of course. But when your memories of me fade and become fonder..." Her other arm was limp at her side, the discoloration reaching across her shoulder.

"Hermione, can you open your shirt?"

"You want sex now?"

Ron didn't even know how to answer that one, instead taking out his wand and whispering a spell to tear open her hospital gown.

It had gone past her shoulder and was making its way to her breast. Soon it would cross sides and reach her heart, spreading everywhere. Leaning over her, Ron had a foolish notion that he, and not Harry, could be the hero this time. He could tilt his head to the side, touch his lips to hers, and stop the sickness.

He could save her or make her happy during her last moments.

Well, it couldn't hurt to try.

- end.

Author's Note: Written from MP119's prompt: "R/Hr, 'tainted.'"