

# A Sweet For A Wish

*by septentrion*

Meeting a hag can be a life-altering experience. At least, it was for Severus.

## one-shot

*Chapter 1 of 1*

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*Disclaimer: my only gain in tweaking Jo's universe is pleasure.*

*Thanks to Dacian Goddess for her patience with me.*

"Don't worry, Dumbledore," Severus said coolly to the portrait of the previous headmaster. "I have a plan..."<sup>1</sup>

He left the office and set off for the Forest of Dean, the sword of Gryffindor carefully concealed along his spine should he ever meet the Carrows or the Death Eaters stationing in Hogsmeade. He trudged through the snow covering the school grounds in one of the darkest nights he'd ever seen. He could barely make out the form of the Whomping Willow in the distance, and even his smoke-like breath hardly stood out against the blackness of the sky. He went through the gates and Disapparated to the edge of the Forest of Dean as soon as he was free of the anti-Apparition wards of Hogwarts. He sighed at the sight of the dense mass that was the vast woodland. How was he supposed to find Potter in it if the Dark Lord couldn't find him at all in spite of their connection? The forest was immense, and the boy had probably protected himself with a battery of various charms and jinxes.

He heard a twig cracking nearby. His wand at the ready, he moved stealthily in the direction of the trees to take shelter from whomever was approaching. A form was soon silhouetted against the charcoal sky. It was rather woman-like, but something was off. The creature's gait was swinging widely from one side to the other. Wild hair, which even Granger's mane couldn't rival, was swaying on its head in rhythm with its pace. The hands were... claws. Granted, it was dark, but no one could have mistaken those appendages for hands. Severus sighed; a hag was roaming the area. He hoped it hadn't met Potter. Or rather...

Severus stepped out of the forest and blocked the hag's way.

"Good evening. Could you show me your Creature Registration Parchment?"

Some of those new laws the Dark Lord's regime had instated were very handy.

The creature cackled and held out its arms in his direction, its hard claws visible to Severus. Disgusted, he took a step back.

"Don't fear, son. You're far too seasoned for my taste."

The hag's voice was rasping and had a panting quality. It made Severus's hair stand on end.

"Your name?" he asked disdainfully.

"Why should I answer? So that you'll throw me in Azkaban?" Her tone was as disdainful as Severus's.

"Why, that's an idea," he purred.

"You don't have the right! I have done nothing wrong!" Her voice was very disagreeable when she was speaking, but it was nothing compared with her shouting.

"That's for me to decide. I am Severus Snape, one of the Dark Lord's most trusted men. If I decide you have committed a crime, you will be considered a criminal."

The hag cackled again and agitated her arms wildly. She seemed a bit crazy; but then, he had always found hags crazy. However, her demeanour exuded mainly fear. Severus smiled malevolently.

"Perhaps we could come to an understanding," he suggested.

The arms stopped moving instantly. If Severus could have seen her face, he would have shivered at the shrewd expression that had taken possession of it.

"What do you mean?"

"I know there are children in this forest. If you can tell me where to find them, I'll let you go without a fuss."

The cackling resumed with renewed vigour.

"Do you expect me to believe you? I won't even have finished telling you what you want to know before you'll have carted me off to Azkaban just because I exist."

"Then, you don't deny that there are children in these woods?"

She shrugged, and the gesture was odd.

"Perhaps," she rasped.

They stood face to face, motionless, neither wanting to concede first. After a while, a wide smile spread on the hag's face. Severus knew because her teeth glinted faintly. She plunged a claw in a pocket of her cloak and extracted something small before Severus could move a muscle.

She extended her claw, and Severus distinguished something looking like a sweet wrapped in colourful paper. He frowned in confusion.

"Surely, you are not presenting me with a sweet?"

As a poisons, er, Potions master, Severus was not about to eat something offered by an unknown hag.

"This is a wishful sweet," she explained. "It is supposed to fulfil the greatest wish you express while you're eating it. If I give you this, will you let me go?"

Severus was getting angry. "I don't need your ridiculous bribe. I have the Dark Lord's favour; I can have anything I want. Now," he growled, "tell me where the children are."

The hag didn't appreciate Severus's tone, obviously; for a second later, she gripped his left arm with her right claw, and it was painful. She forcefully shoved the sweet in Severus's left hand.

"You will take it and you will let me go." She sounded menacing.

Severus whipped out his wand with his free hand and poked her neck with its tip.

"Unclaw me this instant."

The hag stepped back but left the sweet in Severus's hand.

"I've seen a red-headed boy not one mile north from here," she said.

Then, she turned tail and ran into the woods quickly, dodging the couple of hexes Severus sent her way. He was soon alone again, but with a direction this time. The red-headed boy had to be Weasley, and Potter couldn't be far.

"*Lumos.*" A thin beam of light emanated from his wand and caught the wrapping of the sweet he was still holding. Bergamot, his favourite flavour. Curious, he cast several curse and poison detection spells, but found the sweet to be harmless. The hag had probably only been raving when she'd talked of a "wishful sweet". If he had to freeze in an unknown forest, he might as well gain some enjoyment out of it. He popped the bergamot sweet into his mouth and set off north.

He decided against Apparating. He couldn't take the risk of being discovered. Besides, he felt that walking in such a serene and undisturbed environment, however frosty it was, combined with the bergamot flavour, would soothe him, and heaven knew he could do with a bit of soothing right now. He was the Dark Lord's right-hand man. He was also on his way to deliver, after a fashion, a very precious weapon to his enemy's son, who was also Lily's son. Bright, kind, clever, beautiful Lily; he only wanted to remember those traits, and his mind had conveniently fogged over her scorn for his friends and her anti-Slytherin prejudices. He hadn't done what was needed to win her heart; he hadn't known how to do it. As he swallowed the last bit of the sweet, he wished to be loved by such a woman and to have a real second chance at life.

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"Look... at... me..." Severus whispered.<sup>1</sup>

Harry Potter's green eyes found his black ones, but after a second, he was engulfed by blackness, pulled through a dark whirl, before his eyes opened on his own body lying in a puddle of blood on the floor of the Shrieking Shack. He didn't have time to reflect on the strangeness of it, though, for You-Know-Who's voice (since when did he think of the Dark Lord as You-Know-Who?) reverberated around them; that is to say, around Harry, still kneeling at his body's side, Hermione and... him. Shit! He was in Weasley's body! It was hardly better than being dead. He tried to analyse his situation while the Dark Lord was taunting Har... Potter. He was in another's body, but his own thoughts seemed intact. However, Weasley's memories presented themselves to him, mixing with his and confusing his mind somewhat. He'd never heard of such a transfer from a body to another one; as far as he knew, his situation was quite unprecedented. No time to ponder the implications further: Har...well, he could call him Harry, if he was to be a Weasley...Harry was leaving the Shrieking Shack for the castle. Hermione took the lead, and he followed, his eyes drifting to her alluring figure, reminiscing about a kiss he'd never received and yet that was sweet in his mind, wondering about her last glance at his dead body. Perhaps she regretted her burst of outrage when she'd learnt that he was Hogwarts' headmaster.

Severus crawled with the other two through the tunnel like an automaton, though he bumped into the walls from time to time, as he wasn't accustomed to his new body's proportions. They reached the castle silently, avoiding the unidentified bundles, which might have been bodies, that littered the lawn deftly in spite of the darkness. Severus hardly noticed the Slytherin emeralds gleaming on the blood-stained flagstones. Instead, he headed for the Great Hall, Hermione in tow, to see how things were with the inhabitants of the castle. After all, he'd made a promise to keep the students safe. Meanwhile, Harry (it felt weird and normal at once to think of him as Harry) left them, probably to look for Dumbledore's Pensieve and watch his memories. He hoped he hadn't given them to the boy in vain. He glanced at the Lupins' bodies lying next to Fred Weasley's corpse; his stomach clenched at the sight: they had the same whitish complexion he had seen on his own body a few minutes ago. A pang of sadness soon crossed his mind at the idea of those people's death, a side-effect of sharing memories with Ron Weasley. Percy flung an arm around his shoulders, seeking support to quench his grief at his brother's death. He didn't appreciate it, but his quick thinking made him realise he couldn't reject the contact. He adopted a fitting expression of sadness and mourning and set his mind to analysing his situation.

Good points: he was alive; he was conscious; he was young; he was handsome enough; he had an athletic body; he had a newly acquired girlfriend, though how he could

envisage forgetting Lily, he didn't know; he was popular enough; he was offered a real new start.

Bad points: Ron Weasley hadn't been as intelligent as him...he would have to tone down his own abilities; he was Potter's best friend; Granger was his girlfriend.

What could he do? He couldn't get back into his own body. From what he'd seen of it, it was a lost cause. Anyway, he didn't know how he would do it, and he wasn't in a hurry to be dead again. Frequenting Harry Potter and Hermione Granger might not be enjoyable, but might be highly beneficial later in providing him with a new, easier life. Besides, Harry would know of his loving Lily after he visited his memories and would probably spread the tale for everyone to know; he couldn't face the others' pity. *Poor Snape. He was in love with Harry Potter's mother, and he fucked it up.* No, that would be unbearable. He would only have to make the best of a dodgy situation. It was not what he had wished for... wait a minute. A wish! He'd made a wish that night, when he had eaten that sweet! He hadn't believed the sweet had been enchanted! He had so thoroughly checked it for any spell or potions. Obviously, there were still things he was ignorant of. Of course, there was a catch; there was always a catch. His was to share Ron Weasley's fate.

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Harry had won. The boy was not only the Chosen One, the Boy Who Lived, he was now also a Resurrected Man! Ah! That was a title he would have to share with another celebrity who had lived around two thousand years ago. Of course, he'd also had to let everybody know of Severus's closest secret before he'd killed Voldemort with the tyrant's own curse.

Hermione and he were now following Harry across the damaged castle. He managed to come out with a Ron Weasley-esque expression to comment on Peeves's latest made-up song. The boy's memories would be very handy indeed.

"Really gives a feeling for the scope and tragedy of the thing, doesn't it?"<sup>4</sup>

Then he fell silent while he listened to Harry's explanation about what had happened after they had parted earlier. Why should he be surprised that Dumbledore hadn't told him everything, especially that he'd strongly suspected that Harry would live? At last, they arrived in what had been his office for the last months. There, the idiot boy declared his intention of putting the Elder Wand back in Dumbledore's tomb. Harry could have done so much with it. Yet, one part of him was glad to know that the reason of his demise would be out of his sight soon.

After all was done, Harry expressed his desire of retiring to Gryffindor Tower.

Severus couldn't help himself. He blurted, "What about Snape's body? No one knows where it is but us."

Harry looked embarrassed and ashamed for having forgotten about it. He also looked very tired; he was not to be trusted with the care of his body, so Severus added, "How about I go and tell the others where to find it while you go to Gryffindor Tower?"

"Would you, Ron? Thank you."

"I'll come with you," Hermione said. She took his hand in hers under the benevolent gaze of the past headmasters' portraits. Ron's part in him rejoiced in the spontaneous gesture, whereas Severus's part questioned why it felt good to be shown affection by the know-it-all. They left Harry and joined the survivors in the Great Hall. He glanced at Molly and Arthur...his parents now...and found himself with a new respect for the mother who had taken Bellatrix Lestrange down. What's more, she'd saved Hermione's life by doing so. All right, Ginny had been more directly threatened, but there was no doubt in Severus's mind that Hermione would have been the Death Eater's next victim, so he felt like he owed something to Molly. What was with him that made Hermione always come to the forefront of his thoughts? Did he feel Weasley's emotions as well?

They told Neville Longbottom about Snape's body, and the three of them retrieved it from the Shrieking Shack. He was grateful to Hermione and Neville for treating it with great respect... "We will Scourgify his clothes a bit. They're soaked with blood. He deserves better," Hermione had insisted...and for laying it down with the bodies in the Great Hall. He'd feared a moment they'd put it with Voldemort's body. Then, they gave a hand for a while to the busy people who were trying to organise things and to celebrate Voldemort's demise at the same time. A savage joy took possession of him when he saw Greyback's body being moved away. Killing that beast, with the help of Neville, had felt very, very good.

Hermione tugged at his sleeve. "Perhaps we should join Harry now?" she whispered near his ear. The sensation wasn't exactly unwelcome. "We could do with a shower and a rest. You'll need to be strong for your family."

Severus pondered his answer. He had wished for the love of a beautiful and intelligent woman, and near him was one who looked ready to provide him with just that; he was supposed to be mourning his brother's death and to be in need of comfort. Lily was dead. Severus Snape as he'd known him was dead too. He really ought to think of his future. "Will you sleep with me?" he asked abruptly, his words meaning more to him than they seemed.

Hermione blushed deeply and looked nervously around her to see if someone had heard him. "I... I don't know..."

A full-blown Snape smirk appeared on Ron's face and for a moment, Hermione forgot about the mayhem around them.

"Just sleeping, resting. Nothing indecent, I promise." She nodded. "For now," he added, making her blush more than ever. Weasley's wit (or what passed for wit), memories of that book *Twelve Fail-Safe Ways to Charm Witches*, and Severus's experience of life gave very interesting results. Flirting with Hermione was promising to be very entertaining. As it was, she seemed pleased with him, and hand in hand, they headed toward Gryffindor Tower.

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Settling into Ron Weasley's life revealed itself to be less of an ordeal than expected. Severus thanked any deity that might listen for his well-honed acting skills. Of course, Harry and Hermione had looked at him strangely once or twice, especially when he'd spouted knowledge he wasn't supposed to have. He'd pretended he was making an effort to gain Hermione's good opinion.

The girl herself was a bit too bossy for his taste, but so eager to please him (that hadn't changed much from the past) that he put up with this trait of hers. She also practiced her bossiness at work, and her colleagues at the Ministry soon learned to dodge her in the corridors. That made for delicious office anecdotes to share during their dates. However, Severus was persuaded that one day his tolerance would snap, and they would have their first serious fight that day.

For now, it was refreshing to be able to act like a teenager with the experience of an adult. He hadn't known a man who hadn't expressed the wish to be able to do so, and he, Severus Snape, had been granted that wish. He even elected to go working and living with George above the joke shop instead of becoming an Auror. At Weasleys' Wizarding Wheezes, he was entirely free to use his creativity with spells and potions, and it made a lot of money.

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"Hermione," he breathed in his girlfriend's neck one day several months later during her lunch break, "come with me this evening. George is spending the night at Angelina's." He nibbled at her neck with his teeth to punctuate his request.

She moaned and gripped his shoulders tightly. "Yes. I will come with you tonight."

When Severus made love to Hermione for the first time that night, he didn't even spare a thought for Lily Evans. He realised then and there that, at last, he had let go of the past, let go of Lily, and welcome a new love in his heart and in his life. What's more, Hermione returned his feelings. She'd claimed as much when she'd climaxed.

He started to think of ways to convince her to become a permanent fixture in his life. Was it the right time to propose? He felt that the answer was, "Yes."

He should be bothered that she thought herself in love with Ron Weasley, except that she'd told him once, "I don't know how it happened, but you've matured so much since the Hogwarts battle. I find it... attractive." A very becoming redness had spread on her cheeks with those words. "I'm not sure I would have carried on in a relationship with you if you hadn't changed." In other words, she'd fallen in love with Severus Snape and called him Ron Weasley.

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"Do you, Ronald Bilius Weasley, take Hermione Jean Granger to be your wife?"

"Yes."

"And do you, Hermione Jean Granger, take Ronald Bilius Weasley to be your husband?"

"Yes."

It was done. They were married. Severus brushed her lips with his, not daring to deepen the kiss for fear of losing control, and rejoiced in the adoration shining in Hermione's eyes.

Their families and friends cheered the newlyweds as birds and cupids erupted from balloons hanging above the assembly. *Dumbledore would have liked that*, Severus thought. Admittedly, it was a bit sappy, but he didn't care...not when Hermione's smile was so radiant that it eclipsed any other light under the large marquee erected in the Burrow's courtyard.

"You're so pensive, Ron," Hermione whispered to him, jolting him out of his musing.

"I'm thinking how happy I am," he answered, a faint smile on his lips that was very Weasley-esque and Snape-esque at the same time. That earned him another dazzling grin from her. "Shall we?" He offered her his arm, indicating that they should go down the aisle and make room so that the caterer's employees could install the tables and chairs. *Weasley's memories have served me well, but since the Hogwarts battle, all new memories are mine and mine alone. I will cherish this day even more than I cherished my memories with Lily.*

"Something's been on your mind since this morning," Hermione asked while they were dancing. "You don't have regrets, do you?" She was nervous, and her lower lip was suffering through a toothy onslaught.

"Not at all. I'm simply overwhelmed by how good it is to be Ron Weasley."

"Why would you think so?" There were anxiety and teasing in her voice.

"I'm married to the most intelligent and charming woman in the world, that's why."

She laughed. "I'm hardly the most charming woman in the world, but I accept the compliment. Oh, I'm so happy!"

He twirled her around the dance floor until dawn, an exploit he would have been incapable of in his forty year-old body. Hermione never noticed that Ron wasn't supposed to know how to dance that well.

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Two children; he was now the father of two children. A pity they wouldn't share his genetic material, but he could always ensure that they were well-educated and knowledgeable. He and Hermione had the means for it, what with her recent promotion in the Department of Magical Law Enforcement and the very big profit they were making at the joke shop.

"How do you feel, Hermione?"

"Like someone who's been in labour for hours," she tried to joke. In truth, she felt dirty with the cooling sweat on her skin and wanted nothing more than to rest.

In the crib, their son was sleeping his birth away.

"I'll bring Rose by tomorrow. She's nagged Mum about her little brother for hours." He was now accustomed to calling Molly "Mum". She was a bit invading, and he had had a hard time keeping her off-track after his body transfer. She'd felt her son was different, but it seemed that his explanation about war making people change had satisfied her... after the twentieth time she'd been given it.

"You do that. For now, I think I'd like to sleep."

Severus kissed her forehead and left her to retrieve his daughter from the Burrow. He had never imagined he could be father material, yet Weasley's memories had, once more, taught him a few tips on how to take care of a child. He wasn't as emotionally inept as he had been, though a bit of his Snape awkwardness still lingered in him. Hermione found it endearing; therefore he wasn't that keen on getting rid of it.

He'd made a bit of discreet research on the phenomenon that had led to his being in Ron Weasley's body. He'd found mentions of body switching, but in each reported case, the memories and emotions had switched with the souls. He didn't have a clue of where Ron Weasley's spirit, mind or whatever, had gone. Perhaps in his dead body. The idea made him shudder, but there was nothing he could do about it. Instead, he wrote down everything he experienced, compiled everything he could come upon about body transfer, to be released as research material a hundred years after his death. *At that time, there won't be a descendant of mine alive who would have known me.*

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That was it. His elder child, Rose, would be going to Hogwarts. He joked with Harry about his brand new driver's license and glanced discreetly at the Malfoys. With time, he'd come to miss Lucius and Narcissa dearly. He could have done with Lucius's conversation to prevent him from becoming too Gryffindor. *Dumbledore must be delighted, wherever he is. He always told me he thought they sorted too soon.* Still, however fond he might have been of Draco in the past, the boy's cowardice and blind racism were too much to bear, even nowadays. Suddenly, he realised that his daughter and little Scorpius Malfoy were the same age. What if later...?

"If you're not in Gryffindor, we'll disinherit you," said Severus, "but no pressure."<sup>4</sup> *I can't believe I've just said that.*

Later in the conversation, Severus made sure to drive his point home by adding, "Don't get too friendly with him, Rosie. Granddad Weasley would never forgive you if you married a pure-blood."<sup>1</sup>

After that, his daughter climbed aboard the Hogwarts Express and settled in a compartment with her cousins. Rose looked very excited. The shine in her eyes reminded him of the shine in her mother's eyes on their wedding day. Absentmindedly, he slid an arm around Hermione's waist, pulling her against him, while his other hand laid on his son Hugo's shoulder. Overall, these last nineteen years had been bliss. All was well.<sup>1</sup>

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*The prompt I used was: A hag, a magic sweetie, and a wish... or three. What*

*happens when your favorite character finds himself in the unenviable*

*position of the classic fairy tale three-wishes scenario? I twisted it a bit, though.*

<sup>1</sup> Sentence directly taken from Deathly Hallows.