

Samhain's Destiny

by Southern_Witch_69

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Only Chapter

Chapter 1 of 1

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Disclaimer: I'm borrowing some of JKR's characters for a bit of fun (and not making any money). Please don't put me on the hit list to be sued next. Snerk.

This story was written for Larilee, who just had a birthday a couple of days after Samhain...happy late birthday, dear...and who sent me a cute Halloween card. I appreciated it.

Thanks go to ladyinthecloak for the quick beta read.

Hermione stared out the window, a slight frown on her face as she gazed at the bundled up Muggles hurrying home from a long day's work. Soon there would be parents and children roaming about, trying to trek to the designated area that would be handing out treats for Halloween. There was much to celebrate today, the success of her first published book, and yet, she couldn't bring herself to feel completely satisfied.

She and Ron hadn't been getting on very well, as their lives seemed to have taken different paths at some point. If it weren't for their children being at home, they'd likely have separated years before. However, once Rose and Hugo had both started Hogwarts, things were plainly going nowhere quick...so much so that even Mrs. Weasley had noticed. While she and he still lived together, she knew it would be a matter of time before that, too, changed. They'd decided to tell the kids after Christmas of their decision to move on...separately.

"I can't believe it's been over twenty-two years since we all fought at Hogwarts," Ron said loudly, clapping Harry on the back. He'd had a bit much to drink...wanting to celebrate thoroughly, and she couldn't fault him for that. It was a Friday night, and they'd been invited to dinner with Harry and other friends. It was something they rarely did anymore.

She eyed the half-empty glass of wine in her hand. It was her fourth glass, and she felt a little woozy, likely why melancholy had suddenly assaulted her. When she drank, she had the tendency to dwell on things that brought her down. Hermione wished she could be a happy lush like Ron or a quiet one like Ginny or a smiling one like Harry, but no, she was cursed with being sad while into her cups.

"Are you all right?" Ginny asked, placing a hand on her shoulder.

"Yes, I guess so."

Gazing at her knowingly, Ginny said, "I'll always be here for you, you know that, right?"

Hermione smiled. "Yes, and I thank you for that."

"Try to cheer up, your book has had record sales on its first day out on shelves! People were lined up outside of Flourish and Blotts when I passed earlier...probably still are!"

"Yeah, everyone wants to read up on Severus Snape, don't they?" she said with a fond smile. She and Harry had made it their business to see to it that Snape's name gained the recognition that it deserved. Through their efforts, his portrait was placed in the headmaster's office at Hogwarts, a statue of him had been erected inside the Ministry of Magic, his body had been buried right next to Dumbledore's on Hogwarts' grounds, and he'd gained his posthumous Order of Merlin, First Class, as well. Harry had placed that on a shelf in his living room for all to see...right next to his own.

"You did a good thing, Hermione."

She shrugged her shoulders. "I'm not so certain now. I went through his things. Do you know how much he would have hated that?"

Ginny looked out at the street for a moment before replying. "I doubt he would have liked it, no, but I think with the praise he's getting now...the recognition and admiration...he wouldn't mind too much after all." She laughed. "Remember how livid he was when you lot cost him that Order of Merlin?"

Hermione grinned. "Poor bloke. I wish he could have seen all of this while he was alive."

"I'm sure he sees it, Hermione. Just like Harry's parents knew what was going on even though they'd died..." She sighed. "Please cheer up."

Placing her glass in Ginny's hand, she announced, "I'm going to go have a walk, I think. Clear my head."

"Want me to come?" Ron offered.

"No, that's all right. The cold will do me some good."

"Can't hold her liquor, that one," Ron said with a smile.

Harry laughed and waved her over. He held up his glass. "Toast!" The others did the same, and Ginny handed Hermione her glass back so that she could as well. "Here's to Hermione Granger-Weasley, one of the best friends that I've had since I first came to the Wizarding world. May she have much success with all that she does in the future."

Shouts of "hear, hear" rang out, and Hermione couldn't help but to smile in gratitude at her friends.

"Thank you all so much." And with that, she tipped her glass up and drank the rest of her wine. "I'll be back in a little while."

"Go and stop by my pub on your way. There's a party," Hannah Longbottom, nee Abbott, said brightly.

"I think the Leaky Cauldron will have too much going on tonight for me. I think I'll pop over to Hyde Park and back. It'll do me some good."

Finally able to pull herself away from her friends, she left Grimmauld Place, closing her heavy cloak against the cool wind that whipped through the street, shaking the trees as it passed. Once she and Ron separated, what would she do? Where would she go? He'd already told her that she could keep their home, but it was so huge and lonely without the kids. Perhaps she could get a smaller place to start her life anew. The kids barely came home as it was, and when they did, it seemed they only wanted to go to the Burrow to visit their cousins and grandparents. Even Hermione's own parents had drifted away, deciding to stay in Australia. Her job at the Ministry would always be there for her, and there was room for her to move up even higher, but she found even that unappealing.

Her life seemed to be lacking something. For the last few years, she'd been doing research on Severus Snape, going through his things, staying at his home for days at a time, to gather information for her book. But now that she was done with that part of her life, she missed it...missed being in his world...and constantly felt as though she should be doing something more with herself. The end result had been very pleasing, and according to previews, people were praising her efforts and the man she'd strived to bring immortality to.

At this she snorted. "Immortality. Right." If only he'd lived, what would have happened to him? He would have been cleared of all charges, of course, but would he have stayed on at Hogwarts? Would he have ever found love, or would he have remained faithful to Lily Evans (Potter) even after all that?

She looked up at the dark sky and paused for a moment. "Are you at peace, Severus Snape?"

There was no sign that he'd heard or had tried to reply. Shrugging, and feeling somewhat disappointed, she turned and moved along a footpath next to the Serpentine. The water seemed choppy with the wind blowing strongly over the surface, and yet, as always, she still had the urge to get near and skim her fingers along the water. It was an urge she'd always had as a child when her family would visit any place with water. She supposed that was partly why she enjoyed swimming so much. Knowing it was too cool and dark to get close, and that she'd had too much wine to be balanced, she wandered over to a set of benches instead.

While sitting there and trying to collect her thoughts, a few people passed by, some dressed in costume, obviously on the way to some party. She hoped that her children were enjoying the Halloween feast at Hogwarts, and she wondered if they'd ever been invited to one of Nearly Headless Nick's deathday parties. Surely they would have mentioned it.

"What I wouldn't give to be so carefree," she commented aloud, a small smile on her face.

"Nice nigh' for All 'Allow's Eve, innit?" said a woman who neared.

Hermione nodded. "It is." Taking in the woman's appearance, she saw that she was using a fashionable cane to walk with, reminding Hermione of Lucius Malfoy and his ever-present cane. She wondered if, like him, this woman hid a wand inside. One could never tell when she'd meet a witch or wizard, but it was unlikely, as this was Muggle London.

"Min' if I 'ave a seat?"

"No, please, go ahead." She budged up to make room for the lady, gazing at her long, wavy, brown hair and her sparkling eyes. For some reason, she felt very comfortable with her, even felt her presence calming. "You look familiar to me. Do I know you?"

"We never met yet, Hermione Granger-Weasley."

"You know me! But how?"

"I got one of ye books terday, I did."

"Oh, well, what a coincidence, meeting up like this."

"Is a good a place as any, this one."

She simply nodded and gazed back out at the water.

"Are ye lookin' for 'im?"

"Sorry? Him?"

"Severus Snape."

"Er... no, I'm not. He's been dead for over two decades."

"Ah, but I knows ye still want ter see 'im, I do. Ye were jus' thinkin' of it no' long ago."

"Who are you?" she asked incredulously. How could this woman have known that?

"Name's Lari." She smiled kindly and nodded towards a young girl who was walking by slowly and gazing around as if she'd never been there before. "See 'er, do ye?"

"She's a bit young to be out at this time alone." Hermione stood. "Do you need some help finding someone, love?"

"Nay, sit yerself down. She's only 'ere for this nigh', fer Samhain. Some o' us still believe."

The girl smiled and waved. "It's right lovely, isn't it?" she said brightly, continuing on her path.

"Do you mean to say that she's... a dead person?"

"Aye, righ' in one."

"So, she died this past year?" Hermione questioned. It seemed to be a bit much to take in, but ever since she'd been introduced to the Wizarding world, she'd learned to believe in nearly everything a Muggle would consider myth.

"Maybe. Or before tha' even."

"I thought the legend says that only those who died the past year could walk the earth before going to the Summerland?"

The woman shook her head and gave her a dazzling smile. "Tha's no' always the case."

They sat in silence as another group of passersby moved down the path...all had on costumes and seemed to be a little pissed already.

"Bloody dookin' for apples! I can't believe it," one was saying through laughter.

"And I'm right good at it, you prick," said another.

Hermione asked, "How do you know all this? Seem to know so much about me and what I think?"

"I were born on Samhain, go' the second sight."

"You're a Seer then," Hermione said, torn between being unimpressed as she thought of Trelawney, who sometimes seemed more of a fraud than a true Seer, and wanting to believe the mysterious woman.

"Aye." The woman stood. "Get yerself to Diagon Alley."

"Oh, I should stay away from there tonight. So many people are out, and what with my book hitting the shelves today, I might be mobbed," she said with a smile.

"Yer destiny, dear. Samhain is the first day o' the New Year."

"A new beginning," she said softly. "Ah, well, I only came out for a walk to clear my head." Hermione realized she was talking to thin air, as the lovely woman had disappeared, though she could still smell the light scent of her perfume on the air. "Lari?" There was no reply. "Happy birthday... at midnight then," she called aloud, hoping she was heard.

Maybe I should go round to Diagon Alley. I could put a glamour on and just observe while walking through After doing so, she Disapparated with a pop. Once at her destination, she slowly trekked along, taking in the sights. Many of the businesses had decided to pass out sweets to any children who visited in costume. To her delight, many children had dressed up. There were a number of little Harry Potters, Merlins, Dumbledores, founders of Hogwarts, and so on. Interestingly enough, some adults had even put on costumes.

She quickly moved to the side as a troupe of teenagers passed, laughing loudly. Trying to steady herself so as to not bump into a peddler, she slipped on a wet stone and hit her head on the bricks on a corner of a building.

"Owww," she said, lifting a hand to her throbbing head.

"You all right, miss?" asked the man.

She nodded and sat up with a slight moan. "It's a bit blurry, but the pain's already going away."

"I'll get help."

"No, really. It's all right." Shakily, she stood and smiled at the man to reassure him. The look of concern on his face was endearing to her. It was refreshing when strangers actually tried to help others. And she had a glamour on, so she knew he wasn't simply being kind because he recognized her. With that thought in mind, she ventured back out into the open.

It was the figure of a lone man who stood in the shadows of another alley across the way who drew her attention. He was thin, taller than most of the others about, with a straight posture and had shoulder length black hair that hung about his fallow face in greasy curtains. She'd know him anywhere: Severus Snape.

But how was this possible?

She stepped towards him just as a bulky man walked in front of her to hug a shorthaired witch. "Happy Samhain's Eve, Lisa."

"You also," she replied, each patting the other heavily on the back. "Great Halloween, it is."

When Hermione was able to move around them, the man...Snape...had ducked into the alleyway, his dark robes billowing out behind him as he glided away.

"Wait!" she called out, sprinting for him. He didn't stop and was completely engulfed in the darkness of the narrow passage. "Please, Professor! I know it's you." And then she ran right into a solid chest, his arms coming out to steady her.

"Calm down," he said.

And his voice, so familiar yet so long unheard, caressed her as nothing else had in a long while. "I can't believe it. The legends of Samhain... I never thought...oh, Professor Snape! There are so many things that I want to tell you, so much that has happened." She couldn't stave off the urge to hug him and did so for a moment, reassuring

herself that he was truly there before her...corporal indeed.

He released her and gazed at her intently. She could just make out his face, and it looked exactly as it had when she'd last seen it, not a day older. His dark eyes glinted in the pale moonlight.

"Then tell me," Snape replied finally, offering his arm to her.

She took it, and he began to lead her further along the path. "Wait. Let's go back to Diagon Alley. We can have a cup of tea and talk. I want to...er... How long do we have before you... leave?"

"I knew I'd meet you tonight," he said, not looking at her. "I heard you calling to me...have been hearing it actually."

"But how?"

"We who have passed know many things."

"Then you know about what I've been doing? What I think of sometimes?"

He nodded. "I thank you."

"I wish that I could have saved you," she said softly. "I'm sorry about what happened to you. Even Harry has been active in bringing you the respect you deserve."

Snape arched his eyebrow and smirked slightly. "Much to my shock." He then stopped walking and turned to face her, hands moving to cup her face. "Are you happy, Hermione Granger?" When she looked away, he said, "I didn't think so."

"Professor..."

"Severus."

She smiled. "Severus, are you at peace wherever you are in the afterlife?"

"That, my dear, is a tricky question, isn't it?"

"Then the answer is no." Her words were laced with disappointment. "I'd hoped that perhaps things had changed for you, that you'd be happy...free finally."

"Things do not always work out as we'd like them to."

"I'm sorry."

"Don't be. I'd hoped that over time things would change, and while I've not been completely content, I cannot say that the afterlife has been unpleasant...especially now."

"Now?" She looked around. "Why were you able to show yourself tonight? Why never before in all these years?"

"I never had a reason to," he said simply. "I was drawn here, drawn to you."

"Even though you know what I've done? Gone through your things? Wrote a biography about you? Treated your home as if it were my own sometimes?"

He nodded, giving her a slight glare with narrowed eyes. "Even so."

Hermione smiled. "Where should I start? And I want to hear everything you think and all that's happened for you. I've always been fascinated by what happens...oh, I wish we had more time." His smile left her breathless for a moment, and she could feel her insides tingling as his thumbs drew invisible circles on the backs of her hands.

"I believe we have more than enough time," he replied silkily.

It was then that she noticed they'd stopped before a partially opened doorway, and it seemed that bright sunshine was filtering through, beckoning to them. She released his hands and opened the door further, gasping in surprise.

"Where is this?"

"This is where I live," he said, coming up on the side of her.

"It's beautiful...so welcoming, warm, fresh."

He moved past her and stepped onto the soft, green grass, turning to her and holding out his hand. "Come with me, Hermione."

She looked behind her into the dark, cold alleyway and felt that she should return. However, she'd had Severus Snape in her head for years as she'd learned all she could about his life. How could she not follow him? How could she deny the pull of longing that tugged at her?

"I don't understand."

"I think you do."

"I... truly don't."

"You've often wondered what would have happened to me had I been able to live my life after the Battle of Hogwarts."

She stepped forward tentatively. "Yes."

"In an ideal lifetime, I might have gained the respect of those of our world for the sacrifices I'd made, I might have stopped loving the one woman I'd always loved and found someone else who would have helped me move on, I might have kept my job as headmaster, which was quite pleasing, and I might have been able to accumulate a sizeable savings."

"You said an ideal life?"

He nodded. "In actuality, I probably would have kept to myself, quit my job and done a few things to keep me adrift, never leaving my home on Spinner's End, wasting away as I dreamt of a woman long dead and in love with someone else."

Hermione frowned and shook her head. "You don't know that."

"I suppose not," he agreed, extending his hand again. "But I am not fool enough to refuse what has been offered to me, what has opened my eyes and made me see how things could have been, should have been."

She took his hand. "Me?"

"You."

He leaned closer and pressed his lips to hers softly, the sensation filling her with warmth and hope. Filling her. The emptiness that had been overtaking her life seemed to lift. Everything was at once complete, bursting with feeling, tingling, so right. Her life had been missing this spark...was this a dream? Had some of the secret fantasies she'd had numerous times somehow surfaced? But, no, she was careful to not dwell on those thoughts and dreams lately. However, she wanted to dwell on them now. She wanted to experience them.

"Severus..."

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### ***Evening Prophet***

After four weeks in a coma, Hermione Granger-Weasley has finally passed away. Members of her family and close friends were with her when it happened at roughly four o'clock this evening. An eyewitness who wishes to remain anonymous, told us that 'she had the ghost of a smile on her face' as she went.

Granger-Weasley ventured out on the evening of 31 October for a walk after having a few drinks. In an unfortunate accident, she fell and hit her head, never quite regaining consciousness. Her identity wasn't known at first, as she'd placed a glamour on her person that didn't fade until the next day.

She is survived in death by her parents, Drs Jane and John Granger, her children, Hugo and Rose, and her husband, Ronald. Granger-Weasley is best known as one of Harry Potter's two best friends, and her help was critical in the bringing down of the Dark Lord Voldemort well over twenty years ago. She was also Deputy Head of the Department of Magical Law Enforcement at the Ministry of Magic, and her most recent accomplishment was the biography of fallen war hero Severus Snape. It's sold a record number of books and has been on the top of the best sellers list for nearly three weeks now.

More information on this and the location of her funeral will be forthcoming.

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**Southern's Notes:** I'd meant to have this up for Samhain (November 1), but I was sidetracked by my exchange fic and other things. Anyway, sorry that it's a "death fic," but I hope it's still a "happy one" anyway.