

What They're Not

by orm irian

AU Drabble. Hermione finds that she must move on after the last battle. Written a long time ago - I forgot to post it here.

One-shot

Chapter 1 of 1

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"Harry's dead," she mourned in a soft voice, gazing at the messy dark hair and wire-frame glasses she had seen on her best friend for nearly seven years.

"But you're not," a deep voice sounded from behind her.

She spun, coming face to face with the harsh features of her Potions professor. His voice was rough with fatigue and his body, like all those around her – both living and dead – was bloodied and torn.

She looked down, not meeting his eyes. A wisp of ginger-red hair caught her attention and she gasped. "Ron!" she cried in anguish, seeing his neck twisted at an unnatural angle. She dropped to his side, tears rolling down her cheeks. "He's dead too," she whispered through her tears.

A patch of black impinged on her peripheral vision. Professor Snape had knelt next to her on the rocky ground. He placed a hand on her shoulder. "Yes," he confirmed, "Weasley's dead. But you're not," he insisted gently.

She was able, then, to meet his eyes. "What of the other professors?" she asked tremulously, dreading to know the answer.

He flinched, but held her gaze. "Dumbledore, McGonagall, Hooch, Flitwick, Hagrid and Trelawney," he listed in a voice barely above a whisper.

"All dead," she said hollowly.

He nodded. "But we're not," he assured her. Then, rising, he took her hands and helped her up. They both stared at their hands, still joined. He squeezed her fingers lightly, reassuringly.

She nodded slowly, understanding his meaning this time. *Life needs life. Especially in the midst of all this death.* She was ready to accept his comfort. Glancing at the bodies that surrounded them, she silently recited their names: Seamus, Neville, Lavender and Ginny were off to her right. On the left, both Creevey brothers, Hannah Abbott, Michael Corner and Blaise Zabini lay. Friends, classmates, even enemies, were strewn about in all directions. Turning around slowly, she took another look at Harry. He lay atop the empty robes of his vanquished foe, proving once and forever that Voldemort's essence had been as empty and insubstantial as his promises to his followers. Even in death, Harry was victorious: the valiant king who gave his life to save his people. "Thank you," she whispered to him one last time. Resolutely, she

looked back to Snape.

"My friends are all dead, Professor," she voiced steadily. "But right now, I really need a friend." She held out her hand to him.

He immediately grasped her small hand in his. "Now is a good time to begin," he agreed. They set off together across the grounds towards the castle. After a minute of silence, Snape spoke again. "Hermione, it will not be easy being my friend. Many still believe that I was a loyal Death Eater to the last."

She stopped walking and turned to face him. "But you're not, Severus," she averred.

A small smile warmed his features. *She always has been a fast learner*, he observed.

*My sincere thanks go out to Larilee for beta reading this piece.