

Brother, I Am Thou

by *orm irian*

Wildly AU. Twisted one-shot told in ten 100-word parts.

One-shot

Chapter 1 of 1

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Disclaimer: The Potterverse belongs to J.K. Rowling, not me (obviously). I'm just writing for fun; the only payment I can hope for is reviews!

Victory! At last, my chance to mold the world according to my vision has come. No one will stop me now!

He surveyed the field. Ginny Weasley was sprawled on the bloody grass a few feet away. He strolled over and bent to grasp her arm, pulling her easily to her feet.

"Oh, Harry!" she gushed, throwing her arms around the black-haired young man. "You did it! He's gone at last."

"Yes," he replied quietly, relishing the simple feeling of the girl pressed against him. He looked briefly at the empty husk he had once occupied. *This is much better.*

"Miss Granger... Hermione. There's nothing you can do! You can't help him anymore." Wide brown eyes turned toward him, filled with pain and denial.

"Professor, can't you save him?" she implored.

A wordless shake of his head was all his answer. With an anguished cry, she collapsed against him and he pulled her close, offering comfort. After some minutes, he became keenly aware of her soft curves. *Bad timing, old man. Inappropriate.* There was truly nothing to be done for Weasley. But the girl – she was a different matter. He could imagine himself doing many things for – and with – her.

From a distance, Ginny spotted the couple on the ground, next to a still form with ginger hair. "Ron!" she cried, sprinting toward them. Belatedly, her companion realized that he should go also. He needed to fit into this new life; he could not afford to be out of character.

When he got there, Ginny was kneeling in the dirt, sobbing loudly over her brother's body. He stood, gazing down at the empty blue eyes of Potter's best friend. Slowly, he squatted down and, reaching out, gently closed Ron's eyes. An unfamiliar feeling rose inside him as his vision blurred.

Drawn by their daughter's wails, Molly and Arthur arrived. Molly, in tears herself, took the girls to the hospital wing while her husband levitated their youngest son's body off

the battlefield.

Snape watched Hermione stumble away with Molly, suppressing an urge to go and help her. *I will have to go slowly there.* A movement in his peripheral vision alerted him that he was not alone and he turned to see Potter wiping his eyes. His lip curled. *Some things never change. Gryffindors will always wear their hearts on their sleeves.* "Aren't you going with your friends, Potter?" he asked.

Reflexively, he ran his fingers through his unruly black hair. "No. I need to talk to you," he said decisively, turning toward Snape. For a moment, a red gleam flashed from the young man's eyes. He heard Snape's sudden intake of breath, harsh in the silence between them.

"Your failsafe..." he whispered hoarsely. "It was successful?"

"Yes, Severus. My remaining Horcrux prevented my death. It appears Potter also held a fragment of my essence. I was irresistibly drawn into him upon my demise."

Both men were silent, digesting the situation.

Finally, Snape asked, "What do you intend to do?"

"Live."

Unsure exactly what that meant, Snape averted his eyes, opting to watch the now-distant forms of Molly and her charges. *How should I begin to insinuate myself into Hermione's life? I must gradually gain her trust.*

"You desire her," Potter's voice observed neutrally.

Snape hesitated. He'd been watching the girl closely for many months, but had not admitted his interest, even to himself. Finally he replied, "Yes, my Lo—"

"No! Do not call me that! You must address me as Potter. Or better yet," the young man added with a strange smile, "Harry."

Snape could only stare in astonishment.

"Yes, call me Harry. And I will use your given name, as I always have. Everyone will see that the hatred between Harry Potter and Severus Snape is a thing of the past, now that the Dark Lord is defeated." The irony in his voice belied the lopsided smile on his youthful face. "Come. I wish to check on Ginevra."

Startled by the change in topic, Snape blurted, "Why?"

"She is my... girlfriend." The thought was strangely pleasing to him. "I have never had a girlfriend before," he said very softly, clearly talking to himself. "She will be my first."

By the time Snape arrived, Madam Pomfrey had given both girls Calming Draught and treated their wounds. While his companion made a beeline for Ginny, Snape hesitantly approached Hermione. She was awake but inert, eyes desolate. "Miss Granger, I wanted to assure myself that you weren't seriously injured."

"Thank you. I'm f— Well, actually, I'm not fine," she admitted dully.

"If there's anything I can do, you need only ask."

She didn't reply.

"Would you like me to bring some books from my collection?" he asked, desperate for any response.

That brought a solemn nod, but her eyes warmed infinitesimally.

"Severus, wait!" he called, pelting down the corridor toward the scowling professor. "She said yes!" the black-haired young man crowed triumphantly.

"What are you blathering about, Po— Harry?" Two weeks had been wholly insufficient to accustom the dour man to using the given name of James Potter's son.

He'll never see this one coming! The rakish grin Potter had inherited from his father warned Snape to brace himself. "Ginny has agreed to marry me!"

"Are you insane?" Snape snapped.

"No. Not insane. But I... I think I'm... happy."

"Who are you?" Snape whispered.

"I don't really know," he answered enigmatically.

The Potter-Weasley wedding was held, predictably, at Hogwarts. Watching the guests mingle on the lawn, Snape spotted a lone figure wandering toward the lake. *Hermione.* He followed.

She greeted him with a tiny smile. "It's a beautiful day for a wedding," she commented perfunctorily.

"Yes. But perhaps for propriety's sake, they would have done better to wait," Snape observed quietly. *For your sake.*

"I know. But I can't begrudge them this. Harry is ecstatic and Ginny looks radiant."

"And how are *you*?"

"I'm not fine yet," she answered as she linked her arm through his, "but eventually, I will be."

Author's Notes:

Thanks to Wartcap for the quick beta read!

The title is from Ursula Leguin's short story *Betrays* (in *Four Ways to Forgiveness*). But where she used the phrase metaphorically, I used it literally.