Congratulations

by kizzy7

Severus visits Hermione to offer his congratulations on her upcoming marriage. AU.

one shot

Chapter 1 of 1

Severus visits Hermione to offer his congratulations on her upcoming marriage. AU.

"I hear that I am to offer you congratulations, Miss Granger."

Hermione looked up from her desk. Her eyes widened as she saw him, lounging against her doorframe as if he belonged.

"Severus!" His spoken name brought an unconcealed spasm of emotion to her face, and she closed her eyes and told herself not to cry.

He sneered in response. "Or perhaps I should call you Mrs. Krum…" His voice was harsh and cut into her like sharp knives.

She leaned back in her chair and rubbed her temples. The beginning of a headache was settling in. "Why are you here, Severus?"

He chuckled mirthlessly and walked towards her desk. "Simply to offer my congratulations. I am sure you and Krum will be very happy together." His tone, however, suggested otherwise.

Hermione again found herself fighting off tears. "This isn't fair, Severus," she said quietly. "I tried to find you. I spent months looking everywhere, following whispers of leads and… and…" Her voice trailed off as she remembered her dark despair of those days. She had loved him, and he had just left. Just left. A tear slowly slid down her cheek, and she wiped it away, unwilling to meet his eyes.

"Hermione." His voice, quiet and choked, brought her back to him. She glimpsed at him through her tears.

"Hermione," he continued, shifting uncomfortably. She hadn't seen him in over five months, and he looked better than she remembered. Tall, powerful, dark. She swallowed hard.

"I thought that I knew what I was doing," he continued. "Hermione, I thought that… that this would be best for you. I didn't deserve you. Everyone knew that. I knew that. And then that night…" He trailed off.

She paused momentarily, thinking. "What night are you talking about, Severus?"

He said nothing. She tried again. "Why did you leave me? I loved you, more than even I knew at the time."

"You were out with Miss Weasley and Miss Lovegood, I believe. Minerva came by…"

"Professor McGonagall came to our house?" she asked softly. This was going to be bad. McGonagall had understandably disapproved of their relationship whilst Hermione was a student and Severus her teacher. This disapproval, however, had only increased in its intensity once the couple announced their intentions of staying together after graduation.

He nodded. "Yes. She told me that she was worried about you… that you were not happy with me. That our entire relationship was a farce, founded on nothing more than seduction and lies." His voice cracked at that, and her heart ached. "She said I should leave… that I should set you free. That it would be better, and safer, for you. I could not argue with her. She told me only what I knew to be true."

Hermione pounded her fists on the desk, angry. "You had no right to make that decision without me, Severus! Do you even know… do you have any idea what you put me through? What you are still putting me through?!"

His eyes narrowed. "Forgo the false sentimentality, Hermione. You are to be married this weekend." She quieted herself, not knowing how to answer him, not knowing how to tell him that her forthcoming marriage was a charade of false promises and hopes on both sides. She had discovered in the past months that she would never get over Severus. Viktor understood this, as he himself was desperately in love with a married woman. A marriage of convenience, they called it. A chance, however small, to heal together through their friendship.

He walked closer to her desk and placed a small black box before her. She looked up at him, surprised.

"This was to be yours, Hermione. Please accept it now as a wedding gift." Hesitantly, she reached for the box and opened it. Severus nervously shifted, watching her closely.

Inside the box was a ring, a beautiful blue sapphire encircled by diamonds. She gasped. "Severus… were you… were you going to propose?"

He shrugged his shoulders dejectedly. "It matters not now. But yes, I was. I loved you, Hermione. I love you still. I discovered these past months that I am not entirely… whole without you." She was surprised at the emotion in his voice, and even more surprised at the unshed tears swimming in his dark eyes. He had never been one to express his feelings in the years they had been together.

"Hermione, you were the best part of me. I know that now. I regret… I regret so much. But most of all, I regret that because of what I have done, I will have to face my life without you. Every morning, I will wake up without you beside me. It could kill me, just knowing that Krum is the one holding you, comforting you, loving you…. It should have been me." He closed his eyes. "It should have been me."

Hermione, tears flowing freely down her face, still said nothing. What could she say to that? He had hurt her so much….

Severus shook his head and opened his eyes, schooling his features into an impassive stare. "I am sorry, Hermione." He turned to leave, reaching for the door. He paused. "I truly hope that you are happy with him," he said quietly before opening the door.

Hermione suddenly stood up from her desk, strangling a sob at the sight of him leaving. "Severus, wait!" He paused at the door, and she could see the muscles in his back tense in anticipation. "Severus, look at me."

He slowly turned to face her, his expression carefully blank.

"Severus," she continued. "I don't… I don't love him. Viktor, that is. For me, there is only you. It always has been you, and always will be. But you hurt me so much. I don't know if I can… if we can…"

"We can, Hermione. I know I don't deserve another chance, but I swear I will never let you go again. Ever." He stood very still next to her, hardly breathing. His dark eyes were focused intensely on her, and she saw a glimmer in their depths. Was it hope, perhaps? Or fear?

Hermione sighed, her emotions warring with one another. Was it complete idiocy to give him another chance? She didn't know if she would survive if he left her again. She tried to imagine her future without him, with Viktor, but she couldn't. The thought of her life without Severus was similar to trying to imagine her life without air. It had been that way since her seventh year at Hogwarts.

She reached out a hand and tentatively brushed back a strand of his dark, lanky hair. He inhaled deeply and leaned into her touch.

"Severus, we will have to start all over again. I don't know how this will work, but—"

He cut her off. "I will do whatever it takes, Hermione."

She smiled, tears once again forming in her eyes. "I love you, Severus. Just stay with me this time."

He smiled back at her, a truly genuine smile she had seen only a handful of times. He pulled her close in an embrace and she rested her head on his chest, listening to the strong beat of his heart.

Pulling back from him, Hermione held out the black box containing the engagement ring. She smiled again as she looked up at him. "Perhaps you should wait and give this to me later."

Severus grabbed the box, his fingers lightly grazing Hermione's as he clasped it tightly and tucked it in a coat pocket. He leaned forward and rested his forehead on hers, their noses gently touching.

"For you, Hermione, I would wait forever."