

# Memoria

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*Chapter 1 of 1*

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The years of Harry Potter's residence at Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry have been written into the new editions of Hogwarts: A History, and the fantastic tales of a young boy fighting evil were still told by all the students. Well most of the students; some were more concerned about other war heroes.

Rose Weasley walked quietly beside her cousin Albus Potter on their way to the Great Hall. Shifting the book in her hands, she cleared her throat.

"Why is Headmaster Snape's portrait so interested in Mum?"

Albus stopped and looked back at her. "Aunt Hermione? Why would he be interested in her?"

"I don't know, but whenever she comes to visit or use the library, he's always around. I thought you might know something since you're his namesake."

They started walking again while Albus fiddled with his robe hem. "Dad never really talks about him. He only said that Headmaster Snape was one of the bravest men he knew. Why don't you ask him?"

Rose choked and stuttered. "A-are you joking? He's so mean to students. He makes the younger years cry! I don't want to know what he'd do to a fifth year like me."

Sighing and rolling his eyes, Albus held one of the doors open for Rose as they reached the Hall. "Then ask your mum. She's here today, go after lunch."

"I guess I'll have to, since you're no help."

Glaring at each other, Rose and Albus went to sit at the Ravenclaw and Slytherin tables respectively.

Students were milling around the entrance hall and Rose's stomach was filled with a warm meal, when she spotted her mother's bushy hair going down a hallway from the corner of her eye. She had to rush to catch up.

"Mum! Can I talk to you about something?"

Hermione swung around, and Rose had to jump back so she didn't get hit with the stack of books she was carrying. "Oh, sorry, dear." She blew a piece of hair from her face and smiled at her daughter. "What is it?"

"It's about Headmaster Snape's portrait. He's always hovering around you when you're here."

Hermione looked surprised and started looking at the various paintings around them. She frowned, making the laugh lines that bracketed her mouth noticeable.

"I don't have time right now. I have to get these books back to Madam Pince. Come to my rooms tonight, and we'll talk. Make sure you come well before curfew." Hermione winked and continued down the hall.

Rose watched her go and rearranged her own books. Turning her head, she caught the gaze of Headmaster Snape himself. His black eyes bored into hers. Rose paled and hurried on to her next class.

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Later in the evening after dinner, Rose knocked quietly on the door to the guest quarters. Hermione had been coming to the school for research sources so often that the new Headmaster had given her permanent chambers. The door opened and Hermione ushered Rose in.

The sitting room glowed with the warmth of the hearth fire, and the scent of wood smoke hung in the air. There were scrolls layered across the desk in the corner and a tea tray on the coffee table, a half-empty cup sitting beside it.

They sat down on a couch near the fire, and Rose watched as her mother poured her a cup of tea.

"Now," Hermione cleared her throat. "You wanted to know about Headmaster Snape?" At Rose's nod she continued. "Before the war was over, and before your father and I were married, Severus Snape and I were together. I don't remember how it started, and we didn't have long together, but what we did have was one of the best things in my young life."

She chuckled at Rose's aghast look. "He was a sarcastic bastard, but he was also loyal, brave, and sometimes kind. I loved him, I still do, and I know he cared for me as much as he could allow himself to."

Rose sat mute as Hermione walked through the past. She tried to see the ugly, dark, mean man being tender with her pretty, warm, quirky mother, but she couldn't; they just seemed too different.

Hermione patted Rose's knee lovingly. "Don't hurt yourself thinking about it, dear. If you like, I can show you something that might help you understand better."

She went over to a burnished oak armoire and rummaged around in it. Finally she pulled out a small stone Pensieve. It looked like it could only hold a few memories at once. Removing the protective spell, Hermione set it down on the table in front of Rose and gestured for her to look. Hesitantly, Rose leaned over and peered into the bowl. Almost instantly the image of a naked couple floated into view. They were moving quickly in choppy rhythms and hardly making any noise. The man had an intense glitter in his eyes as he watched his partner writhe with pleasure.

A hand on Rose's shoulder pulled her out of the memory, and she looked up at the pink face of the woman she had just seen.

"Oh my, you shouldn't have seen that one! Sorry about that." Hermione took her wand and stirred the Pensieve, picking through numerous scenes, until she found the memory she wanted. "Here we are. This is the one I meant."

Rose gave her mother a skeptical look, but went into the Pensieve again.

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She was pulled down, down until she landed in the middle of a forest. A small tent was set up to the left, and the younger version of Uncle Harry seemed to be chasing after a white doe.

Rustling near the tent caught her attention, so Rose walked towards it, the figures of Headmaster Snape and her mother taking shape.

"Lock it away, Hermione, lock everything away. Every second, every moment, every kind word." His voice was urgent and strained, as if he was being pulled too tight. The cold air moved around them, carrying the night fog in swirls and puffs. Hermione's hand went out and jerked to a stop before going back to her side, like she wanted to reach out to Snape, to reassure him, but was hesitant. The trees around them felt their doubts and swayed morosely. The wind heard their whispers and howled to allow them time alone.

Snape stared into her honeyed eyes and clenched his fists. Rose furrowed her brows when he made to step back as Hermione stepped forward to lay her head on his chest. It was odd, seeing how in sync they were together, like partners in a macabre dance.

"Hermione..."

"Let me have this, Severus. We won't meet again until it's over. Let yourself have this."

Her scent carried to his nose, and the heat radiated from her body into his. Slowly, stiffly, he raised his arms and wrapped them around her. Hermione trembled and gripped his back, burying her face now in the blackness of his robes. They seemed to stand in a cocoon of silence, regrets, hopes, memories flying over their faces. She pulled back and looked up at him, her face pale and drawn.

"I'm scared. Everything is changing. People are dying."

Snape gave a twisted smile and traced her jaw. "People have been dying long before you were born and will continue to do so long after you die. Be afraid; use it to give you an edge." He paused and used both hands to hold her face. "You will survive this. You will become a grandmother many times over, and I will be with you for as long as I can."

Hermione gave a half sob, half hiccup. "Severus..."

He silenced her with his kiss. It was a kaleidoscope to Rose's eyes, going from gentle caresses to hard grips, from passionate sounds to sweet whispers. He plundered and took; he gave until there was nothing left. When he lifted his head from hers, she was breathless.

He licked his lips and spoke, his voice shaking. "Lock everything away in your mind. For your own safety and mine."

Another whip of wind hit them, and a ghostly doe came bounding through the forest, stopping next to Snape, and pranced before him on nervous feet. Shaking its head this way and that, it circled around Snape and Hermione, communing that its task was done and they must leave. It disappeared, and he pulled his cloak closer around himself. He glanced back at Hermione and held her gaze a moment before taking to the sky.

Rose watched as Hermione shut her eyes and tried to engrave the emotions in Snape's eyes onto her heart. Checking the forest around her, she went back into the tent to wait for Harry to come back, leaving Rose standing in the emptied clearing.

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Slowly the memory released Rose, and she sat back in her chair. The scene - not a scene, she reminded herself, a part of her mother's life - had left her sad. That a couple, regardless of who they were, had been torn apart because of a war that happened two decades ago. She looked at Hermione, seeing her mother in a new light. Her brown, bushy hair was kept at a length right below her shoulders, and her face and hands were marred with small age lines. The pink line of Dolohov's curse was just visible above the neckline of her robes. The woman sitting beside her had a whole history that Rose didn't know about. She and Hugo had just taken Hermione for granted as "Mum", always looking forward and never back at those who helped them along the way.

Hermione smiled sadly and smoothed over Rose's hair, so like her own but with Ron's coloring. "I locked everything away, just like he told me to. Most of my memories of Severus are in this Pensieve."

"What... what happened after that?"

"Well, when Harry came back Ron was with him. We carried on as best we could. Along the way Ron and I fell in love. When Severus was... killed, Ron helped me through that and showed me how much he really cared. Then we were married and had you and Hugo."

Rose stood up and hugged her mother tightly. "Thank you for telling me. It must have brought up some bad memories."

"Don't worry, dear. I'll never deny you any knowledge you seek. Within limits of course."

The two women smiled at each other, and Rose quietly left the warmth of the room, thoughts still swirling about in her head. Hermione put the spell back on the Pensieve and carefully placed the stone bowl back in its place. As she straightened up the parchments on her desk she, smiled to herself. She was glad that Rose had come to her with her questions. She was also glad her daughter had never thought to comment on the large silver gilt frame hanging in the far left corner of her personal quarters, showing a similar scene of a dungeon sitting room, and a teacup steaming gently on the coffee table.