

# Leaf in a Book

by *belle4life*

I start to walk back to the castle, lost in my thoughts and ignorant to a shadow hiding behind a tree

## Original Ending

*Chapter 1 of 2*

I start to walk back to the castle, lost in my thoughts and ignorant to a shadow hiding behind a tree

Disclaimer: I do not own Harry Potter or any of its characters.

The tree I sit at pushes into my back after hours of leaning on it for support. Leaves surround me as they fall from the branches of the tree. My book is nestled in my knees as I stare off in the distance, daydreaming of something that could never happen, of someone that could never be mine. A man who barely tolerates me, who still treats me like a petulant child, not a fellow professor who beat all his N.E.W.T. scores, or a woman with passion and desires. No, I get sneers and fully charged silences that I see as proof of an attraction between us and he sees as awkward moments he would rather not deal with. It doesn't matter any more anyway; I sigh and close my book, marking it with a leaf from the ground. As I stand up I see a sweep of black out of the corner of my eye. I turn and it is gone. He obviously turned around when he saw me sitting here. Oh, well, I start to walk back to the castle, lost in my thoughts and ignorant to a shadow hiding behind a tree.

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I step outside to get some fresh air. Albus is always telling me how pale I am and how I need to be outside more. I only come out here to get him off my back. I thought after Voldemort was vanquished, he would have left me alone, my purpose being fulfilled. I figured I could live a basic life and continue until I die, not expecting anything and not giving anything in return. But Albus had other plans. He is constantly pestering me, as is the rest of the staff, telling me I should settle down, get out more so I can meet someone to settle down with. But I already have met her. She is perfection personified. Nothing could ever be better than her. Alas, she is too young, half my age if you would believe it. Speaking of her, there she sits, nose in a book as usual. That's why she is so perfect for me. I could see us sitting on my couch reading, her curled up under my arm, with the fire glowing in the background keeping the bitter cold of the dungeons away from us and casting her beautiful skin in a warm red glow. She is so beautiful. Oh, no, she is getting up; I better disappear. As I peer around the tree I am using as my hiding place, I watch her walk back into the castle, and I wish that things could be different.

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At dinner Albus announces my resignation. I can't stand to work here anymore and be in his presence, knowing that nothing will ever happen, knowing that the chance for a great and powerful love is within grasp and will only ever be just that. I must leave. I know running away is the coward's escape, but I can't stand to be near him anymore. His smell caressing my nose, bringing back memories of the Potions classroom. His magical hands that can wield hexes the likes of which no one has ever seen and yet can chop a root into fine strips and brew a potion that can keep a werewolf sane. Even his black clothes, the ones everyone mocks him for, I love them. That's it, the truth. I, Hermione Granger, love Severus Snape. There is so much controversy in those words, and so much heartache. What was that in his eyes, was it sadness or agony? No, it couldn't be; I must be imagining things. Oh, well, only another week, and then I will be gone; I will not have to sit next to him, breathing in his intoxicating aroma, stopping myself from just grabbing his collar and kissing him, especially when he smirks. How I love that smirk.

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This must be a joke. She couldn't possibly be leaving. She loves this school; she lives for this school. Surely this must be a joke. Wait a minute, she looks sad, and is that a tear in her eye? It must be true; she is not that good of an actor. This can't be happening. I don't believe it, and yet it is true, she is really leaving. I don't know how I will be able to go each day without seeing her bushy hair that she has never managed to control. Or seeing her walking around the castle with her nose literally in a book, but still managing to escape crashing into people. Or even that sweet smell that emanates from her person, that smell that is a mixture of vanilla and something distinctly her that reminds me of home. Oh, my goodness, I love Hermione Granger. I, Severus Snape, noted Slytherin and Death Eater, am in love with Hermione Granger, Gryffindor princess and one third of the Golden Trio. How did this happen? I honestly do not know. This must be for the best. She will move on to a better job and not have a man as old as her father in love with her. Yes, this is definitely for the best. If it's for the best, how come it feels so wrong?

I don't know what I thought would happen. I guess the romantic part of me hoped that he would realize how passionately in love with me he is and would come after me and stop me from getting on the train. But that is just a schoolgirl fantasy, I guess. I look out the window at the trees as they pass the window in a blur, and I wonder why life changes from fast to slow. Some moments, usually the best ones, going so fast, and the bad moments usually taking forever, like class. I laugh at that idea. Ron and Harry would surely find it funny that Hermione Granger found class a bad moment. But now everything seems to be a bad moment, especially if he is not in it. But there is nothing I can do, but sit here and start over, hoping and praying that his memory will not follow me and that I will find someone new, someone who returns my affection, someone who notices me.

I let her go. I can't believe I let her go. It's for the best, but is it really? What was accomplished by not stopping her, by not taking her in my arms and showing her just how I feel about her? Nothing. Nothing was accomplished. I have only succeeded in ruining my life and making myself miserable for the rest of my life. Well, what else can be expected from Severus Snape, except that once again he is miserable? At least no one will notice the difference. Except me; I will notice the difference. I will feel the pain and the longing from being away from her. I will be sad and lonely without her company, without her spouting off annoying facts at random, a trait I love. I will notice her disappearance. I must not dwell on it. If I dwell, then life stands still, and I can't move on. And not moving on is the worst possible thing, I must move forward, without the love of my life by my side.

## Alternate Ending

### Chapter 2 of 2

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I walk down the long narrow hall, the sound of shoes brushing on the floor the only noise I am listening to. I look through the windows, searching, trying to find the answer, the answer to my life. And then I spot it. I glance again, positive that I am mistaken[,] and I see a bush of curly hair sticking up just above the window. She's asleep, her face softened in the comfort of dreams. I watch her through the window debating whether I want to wake her. I open the door quietly, hoping the sound will not wake her for that would ruin my plan. I close the door gently and walk over towards her sleeping form. I kneel down in front of her face and brush a curl back behind her ear. Her eyes gently open, and she stares at me uncertainly, with a powerful question and a hint of longing in her eyes. I brush a kiss across her lips[,] and she leans into me pulling me to her with reassurances of her love.