The Silver Doe

by Morsmordre

Hermione's life shattered at the end of the Second Dark War. Can Severus mend her
broken soul? This story is a Tragedy: Please heed the warning. This story is
complete in 1 chapter.

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Chapter 1 of 1

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The characters in this story belong solely to JKR. I make no Galleons or any other compensation by writing this. Thanks to my beta, NSS, for helping me with my first story.

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The hooded figure walked noiselessly through the trees of the Forest of Dean, as much as the man she was visiting had moved in life. Why they had chosen this lonely spot to bury such a hero, she would never know. She had been coming here for five years, now. Each anniversary of the triumph over Voldemort may have held celebration for most, but for her, it was only tears and bitter loss.

Hermione Granger, Unspeakable in the Department of Mysteries, had buried herself in her work as soon as the war had ended. She attained the post easily with her record level scores from the university and, of course, Hogwarts.

Hogwarts. The school had a way of not letting its students go, or professors for that matter.

She recalled her days spent there with nothing more than a sense of longing. Her parents had been killed by Death Eaters, and her two best friends had both married, eventually going their own ways. It seemed to Hermione that everyone's life had moved on, except hers. With no family left and no one to be involved with, it was as if time stood still for her. An agonizing Hell. She hid herself away at work, living her life at night when she slept. She always dreamed of Hogwarts, of long, black hair and bottomless dark eyes that narrowed when looking into hers. She lived at night with the man she'd come to see, now cold in the ground, locked away from her, forever. She was still in love with Severus Snape. And he would never know.

The bitter tears welled in her eyes, as they did every time she thought of him. Recalling how much she loved the man, from the moment she locked eyes with him in her very first class to the time she cradled his head in the Shrieking Shack as he took his last breath. Life had been so unkind to him. She had been the only one amongst the student body, and much of the wizarding world, to see beneath his mask, to know the delight he took in brewing a difficult potion no one else could seem to manage, as well as the sorrow that lay beneath his well-guarded outer walls. But he had let her in; he kissed her.

The night of the final battle, when all hell was breaking loose, they had crossed paths and stopped. Time paused for a moment for them. Staring into his fathomless black eyes, she saw a flicker of something there she'd never seen before. It looked like love; it looked like her professor was truly and desperately *in love*.

He dipped his dark, silky head down to meet her lips. His cruel, thin lips had been deceptively soft. She remembered him beginning tentatively, changing in pitch and intensity as she responded. The kiss deepened until they were almost feeding off one another in the heat of the magic between them. It was a tangible force; in that moment he accepted her as a woman, *his* woman. And she had poured her heart and soul into their stolen moment.

Reluctantly, he pulled away against her whimpered protest. She needed him. How was she going to live without this extraordinary man in her life? He embraced her, pulling her form close to his body. He was so lean, muscled and warm. The rumors of him being cold inside and out were untrue he was dragon fire encased in flesh and bone. He pushed his face into her curls as she snuggled into his chest. He smelled of sandalwood and herbs. It was an aphrodisiac for her.

Abruptly he pulled away from her. The separation was as painful and foreboding in that moment as it was for a woman who had given birth, only to have her child die. She felt an acute sense of loss as he broke physical contact with her. Grasping onto his robes, she tried to stop him, to tell him. *I love you, Severus.*

"Professor, I need to tell you something. It cannot wait."

He had nearly stopped to listen to her sweet voice. Instead he responded: "I'm sorry, Hermione, I truly am. It will have to wait *He* is calling me."

The regret was in his eyes; for the first time he could not mask it. He was in pain. His heart was breaking. But he turned and left anyway *He called me 'Hermione'. He's never done that before.* A sense of dread filled her, and she dropped to her knees, keening at the indifferent sky.

He turned around at her cries, they were funereal and it wrenched his gut. His voice began to crack. "It's going to be alright, Hermione. Really, it will. I I understand. I must go now." And with a swish of his black robes he was gone. It was the first and last time she saw him as the man he really was.

Severus Snape had kissed her on this night, five long years ago; he had let her alone into his soul.

Of course the man she thought she once knew as Professor Snape had been impenetrable, snide, and sometimes evil. Who wouldn't have been if they'd been forced into his position? Yes, she knew he had made the choice to join Voldemort's followers. But he had also made that choice very young, spending the rest of his life in chains, in some form of servitude or another. Whether it had been spying for the Order or staying safely in the dungeons of the castle, serving a higher purpose, the man had given everything he could have given and gotten nothing, nothing in return. She nearly spat at the thought of this, for it was what upset her the most.

Pushing the angry thoughts away, she slipped into a clearing of the trees and found her lover's bed. The full moon slipped out from the clouds above, and she thought morosely of her beloved Potions master making Wolfsbane tirelessly for a man he hated. The chill of late fall was biting at her skin, but she dropped her cloak to the ground anyway, sitting on it.

"Hello, Severus," she simply said before spreading out her things. In her mind, she imagined him greeting her back. She stretched out, pouring herself a glass of wine and one for him. She sat his on the neat, small headstone that simply read: Professor Severus Snape, Potions Master for Hogwarts, Fallen in The Second Dark War.

As usual, to her disgust, graffiti and debris littered his resting place. She looked at the mess in distaste. Words like *traitor,' 'Snivellus,'* and *'glad you're dead, murderer!'* leapt out at her before she pointed her wand to Scourgify it clean.

She drank her wine beside him, the warmth of it coursing through her veins, making her feel a little better. She'd been going through a lot of wine these past years, and it was starting to tell. Her hair was no longer bushy and springy, but lank and hung in clumps. Gone were the curves that go with womanhood; she was skeletally thin and pale. She also lacked the inquisitiveness that used to irk him so. "He'd probably be glad of that," she thought to no one but herself.

Hermione had fully intended to pour her heart out to him as she'd done on so many visits here before, but it offered her no relief, most likely disturbing his rest. Instead she picked up his old copy of **Moste Potente Potions** and began to read aloud.

She finished reading the Veritaserum instructions to him with a final, *'Add three flies of the lacewing, and stir once, counterclockwise.'* She gathered her things together, taking a last swallow of the elf-wine she'd brought. "I miss you, Severus," she told the cold grave, standing to turn and leave.

The chill wind kissed her face, and she stopped, turning to him, expecting... something. "Silly girl," she chided herself. "What were you expecting?" And she froze. A silver doe soundlessly made its way to where she had been sitting, her silver eyes mournful at the velvet brown ones that had begun to cry anew. A Patronus! Severus' Patronus! How can this be? Suddenly, his voice sounded from the doe's mouth, smooth rich velvet. Her heart caught in her throat.

'Don't cry for me anymore, Hermione. It is past time you learned to live again. I loved you too, my silly, sweet, brilliant girl, but you need to move on. Let me go, and find happiness until we meet again. And we will meet again, Hermione. I promise you this. But don't let that stop you from living your life to its fullest potential. I'm in a much better place than I could have possibly imagined. Now it's past time for you to go. Remember my words.'

Hermione didn't know what to do. She wanted to plead with the Patronus to wake him up, but at the same time, his words had healed something inside her shattered soul. She looked back at the doe, and unbidden words tumbled from her lips.

When the wind is blowing through the trees

But, lo, the trees stand still

I will keep a watch for you,

A soft and silent vigil.

When the moonlight bathes the grassy bed

Where you rest forevermore,

I stand and wing a thought to you

Remembering you before

You walked alone, your sorrowed path,

And could not find your way

It was never all your fault

You were too good to stay

And we, who are left behind,

Are shadowed by your star

That burns more brightly than it could on earth

We must view you from afar

All your disappointments now

Have fallen by the way,

Your dreams are free to carry you

Wherever you might say

Your sleep is unencumbered now

From nightmares and the day

But now it's left to us, still here,

To face the dawning day.

The silver doe regarded Hermione softly for a moment, then moved, inclining her head, indicating she should follow. She started off after the Patronus that had come to mend her soul. It led her to the edge of the wood, where dawn was breaking, and then evaporated in the mist.

Hermione felt as if she'd woken from a deep slumber. She was prepared to greet the morning. Not looking behind her, she Disapparated with a crack.

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Morsmordre's Notes: The poem in this story is originally titled 'For Shannon'. He was a beautiful, wonderful man who was close to my heart. I would never have lent it to anything, but Severus and his death in DH was a tragic event. The characters in all the books I love are almost as close to me as friends. I think I cried for at least one hundred pages while reading 'Deathly Hallows'. The poem, to me, is about tragic loss and eventual acceptance and healing. This is not the original version I altered it slightly to suit Severus and Hermione. Thank you to all who have read.