

# Till Death Do Us Part

*by ayerf*

Hermione and Severus have marriage troubles. The only way out is death ... Or is it?

## One shot

*Chapter 1 of 1*

Hermione and Severus have marriage troubles. The only way out is death ... Or is it?

AN: Written for septentrion. Kindly betaed and summarised by Kribu.

The prompt: Hermione and Severus had been married for 19 years, but their marriage seems dead. Trouble is divorce is illegal in the wizarding world, and separation is strongly disapproved (it would endanger their social status, or even their job), so instead they try to kill each other. You can do humour or angst or whatever suits your skills. I'd like a credible happy, or at least hopeful, ending, but if the muse leads you in dread-land, it's fine by me.

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"The necklace suits you."

Hermione looked up from her plate, startled, at Severus's words. They rarely spoke anymore, exchanging rare chilly civilities in passing, not even caring enough to argue. She fingered the delicate thread of silver at her collarbone.

Her lips quirked into a smirk. "Thank you." "I bet you thought it would suit me even better in death." "Bill Weasley thought so too."

Severus raised his glass in a silent 'touché', his eyebrows following suit. "I was under the impression that you were not on good terms with the Weasley clan."

"I'm not, but Bill is always interested in pitting his wits against cursed objects, no matter who owns the object in question."

He grunted, and moved the glass towards his lips. Hermione did her utmost to control her breathing, avoiding looking too closely at him, yet unable to look away.

Just before the wineglass touched his parted lips, he paused. "I almost forgot. A toast: to our nineteenth anniversary."

She picked up her own glass, almost taking a sip from it when the lack of movement from Severus drew her attention to him. He was waiting for her to drink first, not a suspicious act in itself ... But there was something in the way he was looking at her that made the skin prickle on the back of her neck. His gaze seemed impassive on first glance, but in the dark depths of his eyes was a keen interest in her actions. A malevolent interest; he looked much like Crookshanks had when playing with an unfortunate mouse.

Hermione lowered her untouched glass back down to the table. "Why don't we celebrate properly?" She stood, and held out her hand to Severus, pointedly eyeing the bedroom door behind him before flicking her gaze back at him to observe his reaction.

His expression was just recovering from wide-eyed shock, going straight to narrow-eyed suspicion. "We haven't shared a bed in months. Why now?"

"As you implied with the toast, it's a special occasion." She rounded the table and leaned close to him, taking the glass from his hands and setting it down. Hermione

smirked to see him drag his eyes away from her cleavage.

She took his face in her hands and covered his mouth with hers, coaxing his lips apart with teasing strokes of her tongue. She pulled away when he began to respond, beckoning him to follow her, smiling triumphantly when she heard his chair grind against the floor.

He caught up with her, pulling her around to face him before he pinned her to the door with his body, crushing his mouth against hers.

Hermione's eyes fluttered shut, and she speared her fingers through Severus's silvery hair, pulling him closer.

Severus wrapped one arm around her shoulders, reaching down with the other. The door catch clicked before it swung open, almost depositing them on the floor, but Severus managed to tug them towards the bed, still kissing.

He overestimated the distance to the bed, and collapsed back onto it, Hermione on top of him.

She felt an unexpected twinge of reluctance and regret as she reached for the closest pillow. But the thought of the innumerable attempts on her life over the past few months quelled any further hesitation. She thrust the pillow down, putting as much effort as she could into keeping it pressed to his face.

A muffled shout escaped him, garbled by the pillow. He bucked his body, trying to throw her off. Then he grabbed hold of her, wrenching her away from him, and reversed their positions, hands tight around her wrists.

Hermione swallowed hard, suddenly all too aware of how vulnerable she was. If he chose to try smothering her, it was doubtful that she'd manage to stop him.

He bent his head down to hers, his cheeks flushed, his eyes almost sparking with barely suppressed fury. "That was foolish of you, wife." He moved even closer, positioning his mouth by her ear, his ragged breaths raising goosebumps on her skin.

His hands tightened on her wrists briefly before they loosened. He pulled away slightly, so that he could look at her. "You hesitated," he stated, eyeing her thoughtfully.

Severus deliberately shifted against her. She felt his hardness twitch with renewed interest, having flagged a little during their scuffle. His nostrils flared as he inhaled deeply. A slow smirk spread across his face.

"So that's why. You've missed my company."

She narrowed her eyes, shifting a leg to rub her thigh against his groin. "Feels like I'm not the only one," she retorted.

"Truce?"

Hermione nodded, and they sealed the deal with a kiss.

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Severus collapsed forwards onto Hermione, catching most of his weight on his elbows, although she was too caught up in her bliss to notice, her head thrown back and her throat aching from her cry of ecstasy.

When Hermione had got her breath back, and her throat no longer throbbed, she nudged him. He withdrew, retrieving his wand to deal with the resulting mess. Hermione couldn't help but watch him warily, although so far neither of them had directly used curses on the other. After all, the aim wasn't to end up in Azkaban.

"Let's be frank, Severus. There was no point in that tryst unless there's something to celebrate. The current state of our marriage is not that something, I think we both agree."

"Still so refreshingly blunt after all these years, my dear," he sneered, his scornful expression at odds with the tender way he ran his fingers over her neck. "But it was a reminder of why we married in the first place."

"Kicking you out of bed was a mistake," Hermione admitted.

He rolled over, staring at the ceiling. "And becoming fed up with sleeping on the sofa, lumpy as it is, was not ..." His face twisted. "It did not justify my actions," he said, between tightly gritted teeth.

"Nor did yours justify mine. We both made mistakes. We should have had this discussion months ago."

He reached over to place his hand over hers. "Indeed. At least we have kept this whole palaver to ourselves."

Hermione nodded. Not even the house-elves knew that the Snapes had been having problems. She turned her hand under his, so that she could squeeze it.

"Shall we give this," she said, gesturing between them, "another try then?"

"Provided we keep ... discussing things." He grinned wolfishly.

"Agreed." She leaned over to kiss him, slanting her lips across his.

A tell-tale pop of Apparition from next to the bed sent Hermione diving under the covers, yelping.

"Winky wants to know if Master and Miss Spewy Wife wants wine."

Hermione twisted around, holding the covers up to her throat. Winky the house-elf was holding two glasses of wine.

"Thank you. I do believe we have something to toast." Severus held his hands out, trusting Hermione to keep him covered.

Winky scurried forward, passed the wine to Severus, and hurriedly popped away. The house-elves still feared Hermione due to S.P.E.W., while Severus was scary to just about everyone except his wife.

Severus passed Hermione one of the glasses, wrapping his newly freed arm around her. They clinked the fine crystal together, murmured 'To our marriage' in unison, and raised the glasses to their lips.

It was only after she had swallowed that Hermione looked at the wineglass in her hand. She looked from her glass to Severus's, a fearful suspicion dawning in her mind. "Aren't these the glasses from dinner?"

They exchanged a horrified glance.