

A Hero's Farewell

by HermioneWeasley1972

Harry goes back to get Snape's body and thinks over the past years with him.

Chapter 1

Chapter 1 of 4

Harry goes back to get Snape's body and thinks over the past years with him.

The dirt on the ground beneath his feet muffled his footsteps as he walked towards his destination. He had waited for his chance to leave all night, but no one seemed to want to leave him alone. He had needed time to get away, to collect his thoughts, to take time and breathe.

As he walked, he thought about the past few hours.

The war was over. Voldemort was dead, and Harry couldn't believe that he was finally free, after seventeen years of having to live under the horror of the Prophecy. He knew that he had only found out about Voldemort when he was eleven, but after everything he had been through, he knew that Voldemort had always been a part of his life.

There was feasting long into the night after Voldemort's defeat, but Harry was having trouble taking part in it. Conversation went on around him, but he hardly heard it. All he could think about was what he had seen in the Pensieve.

Harry was lost in his thoughts when he realized that someone was talking to him. He looked up to see Hermione looking at him.

"Harry, are you alright?"

He gave her a smile, which he hoped was reassuring. "Yeah, I'm just thinking over things." He swung his leg over the bench and stood up.

Ron looked up from his plate. "Want some company?"

Harry didn't answer but simply shook his head as he walked out of the Great Hall.

The walk seemed to be taking forever. Was the passageway always this long, always this dark? Even his Lumos wasn't doing much to permeate the darkness. Whether it was due to his own thoughts or by reason of his general weariness, he didn't know.

He was glad that the war was over, but it felt like the end of a long journey. He was happy that he had reached his destination, but the journey had been so long that he was tired. The burden of carrying the weight of the prophecy for so many years had worn on him.

But before he could rest, before he could enjoy his freedom, he had something that he needed to do. He had someone that he had to see, something that he had to make right.

A/N: This is a response to the DH Prompt Challenge number 4:

Snape is dead. Harry/Hermione/Ron (or someone) goes back to get him... carries the body back to the castle. Harry and co. are

confronted at the doors of the Great Hall, and Harry declares that Snape was Dumbledore's man. A Hero's good-bye.

Chapter 2

Chapter 2 of 4

Harry goes back to get Snape's body and thinks over the past years with him.

At long last he reached his destination, although the gloom did not dissipate. As the feasting had gone late into the night, he wasn't surprised to see the eastern sky beginning to lighten. After all, it was June, and the sun rose early this time of year.

Wishing he had the talent that Hermione did for portable fires, he relied on the light of his wand to guide him. It was silent in the Shrieking Shack, and the silence seemed to press in on him as he stood there, not daring to move, barely daring to breathe.

It had taken all of his will for his legs to carry him here, and now that he was here he wasn't sure that he could do it. But he had to. He knew that somewhere, somehow, his father, Sirius, and Remus wanted him to. The three of them couldn't make things right, but he could. And he had to do it for his mother.

Slowly, he walked over to where the body of his former professor lay. He realized with a start that that had also been the first time that his scar hurt. That wasn't surprising, considering that Professor Quirrel, who was sitting next to him, was possessed by Voldemort.

He could remember his first Potions class like it was yesterday. Professor Snape's voice was soft, almost reflective, as he took roll call and came to his name.

"Ah yes, Harry Potter. Our new – celebrity."

Harry looked around. But there was no one there. Simply a memory.

"There were times I hated you as much as you appeared to hate me," Harry said, looking down at the form of his professor. The honesty of his own words shocked him. It wasn't that he hadn't thought it. But he hadn't ever said the words, not that he could remember.

Harry didn't know how long he stood there, reflecting on the experiences that he had had with Snape – the time when Ron told him that he had cursed his broom, when he saw Snape with the bloody leg... Everything had pointed to Snape being the one who was trying to get the Sorcerer's Stone. But all that time, he was trying to save him.

Looking up, he realized that the morning light was starting to filter into the windows, and it fell upon Snape's face. Harry stifled a gasp as he looked upon his face and saw how old his former professor looked. His face was twisted in pain, instead of bearing the usual look of contempt or loathing.

"I never thanked you for what you did for me. Even if I didn't understand it at the time, you were doing what was best for me." Harry realized, for the first time, that it was partly because of Snape's treatment of him he had the strength to do the task that had to be done.

A breeze fluttered in through the window, gently ruffling Snape's long hair.

"There will be no more misunderstandings. Everyone will know the truth." Bending down, Harry tried to pick up his former professor, but found that he was too heavy. He cast a lightening spell on his body, then scooped him up in his arms.

A/N: Direct quote from Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone used in this chapter.

Chapter 3

Chapter 3 of 4

Harry goes back to get Snape's body and thinks over the past years with him.

The walk back from the Shrieking Shack seemed to take twice as long as the journey there. As he walked through the tunnel, he couldn't help but looking down at Snape's face. The face that had always been so stern whenever they were in class, that was always full of loathing, was still contorted with the pain that had been associated with his death.

He remembered how much he, along with Ron and Hermione, had disliked Snape. In fact, in his second year when he'd arrived with Ron in the Anglia, and they hadn't seen Snape at the Sorting, they had both hoped that he had been fired.

As Harry made his way through the tunnel, he realized something with a start.

His relationship with Snape had been similar to the relationship he'd had with the Dursleys.

Even though his aunt and uncle didn't like him, his aunt, at least, had begged her husband to allow him to stay so that he was protected. With Professor Snape, he knew that he hadn't liked him because he looked so much like his father. But, just like with his aunt, he had protected him.

"It couldn't have been easy for you, seeing me day after day," he said, almost reflectively. "I never knew until now, never understood. Thanks for helping me understand."

He thought about everything that he had seen in the Pensieve, about his mother's friendship with Snape. In the Pensieve he had seen a side of Snape that he had never seen before. Harry realized that Snape had wanted him to know the truth, to know why he had done everything he had done.

He stepped out from below the Whomping Willow and squinted at the bright sunlight. How fitting it was that it was dawn. It was the dawn of a new era without the threat of Voldemort and the dawn of a new era when the truth would be revealed.

His footsteps quickened as he made his way towards the castle. Soon everyone would know the truth.

Chapter 4

Chapter 4 of 4

Harry returns to the Great Hall and the truth is revealed about Snape.

Harry stood at the doors to the Great Hall for a moment. This wasn't going to be easy, but he knew that doing the right thing seldom was. How many times over the years had he been persecuted for doing what he knew was the right thing? More times than he could count.

He finally opened the doors to the Great Hall and found that the celebratory feast was finally winding down. Several students were at the doors when he entered.

"What are you doing with *him*, Harry? He's a murderer!" one of the students shouted.

At that, every conversation in the room stopped, and all eyes turned towards the back of the room. Harry ignored the stares and the whispers as he made his way towards the front of the Great Hall. He could feel every eye upon him as he finally came to a stop at the front of the room.

"Many lives have been lost," Harry said, looking out across the room. "We have honoured them, and mourned for them, and we keep their memories safe in our hearts. We will speak of them with love and with only fond memories. They are heroes in our hearts and minds."

He paused as he heard quiet snuffles and an occasional blowing of a nose.

"But there is one person who died in this war who was looked upon with contempt and with hatred. He died a lonely death, and he was left alone in the Shrieking Shack. No one went back to get his body to give him honour. He was no one's hero. Yet, his task was the hardest of anyone's."

Looking at the student who had first spoken to him when he'd entered the Great Hall, he said, "You call Professor Snape a murderer. I call him a hero. He left for me some memories, so that I could know what truly happened."

He looked at Professor McGonagall, who was watching him closely with a grim look upon her face.

"Professor Dumbledore was dying a painful death. He asked Professor Snape to kill him because he knew that Draco Malfoy would not be able to carry out his mission." Harry looked over at the Slytherin table, where he saw Draco looking very uncomfortable. Before turning his head, he saw Narcissa nod at him in thanks.

At this he saw Professor McGonagall dabbing at her eyes with her handkerchief.

"Professor Dumbledore trusted him when no one else would, and I, for one, will honour his memory."

Just then he could hear shuffling of feet, and Ron and Hermione came forward to stand beside him. Hermione transfigured a chair into a table, and Harry laid his body upon it. The silence that followed was deafening.

* * *

Harry stood between the two tombs. The funeral had ended just a few hours before, and it was nearly time for him to leave Hogwarts for the last time. Going over to the black tomb, which stood in stark contrast to the white one beside it, he traced his fingers over the lettering which Professor McGonagall herself had requested.

Severus Snape

Professor

Headmaster

Hero

"Thank you, Harry Potter."

Harry looked around, but didn't see anything. He wondered if he had imagined what he heard. Just then, he saw a doe walking across the lawn. She stopped and looked at him and then bounded off into the woods.

"You're welcome, Professor Snape."