

Heroes

by orm irian

A response to the prompt: "Severus has found Hermione's shoe. What's next?" Told in three 100-word drabbles.

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Chapter 1 of 1

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Forenote: This little bunny hopped into my head after reading two responses to the drabble prompt: "Severus has found Hermione's shoe. What's next?" Thanks to Droxy, who set this prompt at "Terminus" (which I did not attend – boo hoo!). I hope you don't mind if I join the fun anyway!

The trees whispered and swayed above him as he wended between their clustered trunks. Masses of twisted branches blocked the fading light.

The Forbidden Forest: an apt, albeit melodramatic, name. Snape sneered to himself, dismissing the menacing ambiance that flowed from the trees. He narrowed his eyes as he scanned the forest floor, the detritus of countless seasons impeding his search.

There! A few spots of fresh blood, rusty-brown in the gloom confirmed that he was on the right path. He quickened his pace.

Just short of the centaurs' favorite watering hole, he found a girl's trainer. It was bloody.

The crackle of dead leaves brought Hermione's heart into her throat. *Someone's coming!* Her wand snapped up, rock-steady and with a hex vibrating at its tip. She wished she could get under cover until she knew whether friend or foe was approaching.

Abruptly, a man dressed all in black stepped from behind a tree.

"Professor! Thank Merlin it's you!"

Snape's calculating gaze swept over the clearing, taking in the details. Mulciber and Selwyn lay a few yards from the girl, unconscious and trussed-up like Yule turkeys. On the girl's right foot, he spied the twin to the shoe he'd found.

"It appears that you don't need my help after all, Miss Granger. Why did you send your Patronus?"

With a grimace of pain, Hermione awkwardly shifted her left leg, bringing it into view.

A compound fracture – the fibula. Snape glanced towards the men.

“Yes,” Hermione answered his unspoken query. “They ambushed me by the lake... but underestimated me in the end,” she said with grim satisfaction. “I’m afraid I don’t need a hero, Professor. But I could use a shoulder to lean on.”

“I’ll go you one better, Miss Granger,” Snape replied, striding forward and scooping her into his arms.

Author’s note: A compound fracture is one in which the bone protrudes through the skin—which accounts for the blood Snape found while looking for Hermione.