

The Fullness of Time

by Bambu

How does a fugitive evade capture? What happens after Severus Snape and Draco Malfoy flee? A one-shot possibility.

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Chapter 1 of 1

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A short, post-Half-Blood Prince, one-shot.

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Cold

Hungry

Hunted

These were the words which ran through their minds and were the subtext of every conversation they had in those first months.

That night atop the Astronomy Tower had changed everything, and, now, the two wizards were running for their lives.

The impossible task had indeed been impossible for the younger wizard, and had made a murderer out of his guardian. Before they could reach her, Draco's mother had borne the brunt of Voldemort's displeasure, and his father had been dead before that first dawn.

Neither Snape nor Draco could expect anything more than an old-fashioned witch burning or the Dementor's Kiss -- from those few remaining spectres at Azkaban -- if they were found.

Of course, the Ministry's plans would seem like a day at a Muggle spa if the Dark Lord found them first.

They chanced one trip to Diagon Alley, heavily disguised, and exchanged as much of their liquid assets as they could manage in one transaction. Then they'd simply disappeared, from wizarding Britain, from the wizarding world.

Gone

Unmissed

Unlamented

Long, Dark years passed. Britain's wizarding civil war spilled onto the continent. Dementors bred, Inferi walked in daylight, and the Patronus was taught to any witch or wizard who could cast it.

Then, in what would later be written up in the Muggle news as a horrific act of terrorism, the war ended.

The Boy Who Lived was indeed The Chosen One. Only this time he didn't live. He was thirty-three when he died. Just like Jesus Christ. The world of man doesn't protect or cherish its saviors.

The Order of the Phoenix was decimated.

The Death Eaters didn't live up to their name; they didn't eat death, it ate them.

The Order of Merlin, First Class, was awarded to each member of the famous Gryffindor trio -- posthumously.

Britain rejoiced and mourned in one breath, and life went on.

Rebuilding

Repopulating

Burgeoning

A redhead ascended to the highest office in wizarding Britain. He was the last surviving member of his large family, and his political platform included regulations regarding cauldron thickness.

Draco found a willowy blond from Denmark on the beaches of Corfu. He elected to live life as a Muggle, and became a café owner. Annelise made him as happy as he'd ever been.

His guardian moved on, a solitary wanderer.

Time passed.

The heroes of the Great War were written into history books where the villains had their own pages. There remained a dusty, barely remembered list in the Office of Magical Law Enforcement. It was very short: Draco Malfoy and Severus Snape.

Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry reopened with Filius Flitwick as headmaster. Hogwarts' letters were sent to promising wizarding youth.

Peace

Prosperity

Normalcy

Ten years later, on a quiet boardwalk in windswept Mendocino, California -- an artsy community known for its eccentric citizens -- a bushy-haired woman bumped into a dark-haired, sallow-faced man.

For a very long time neither spoke.

"Professor."

"I no longer teach, Miss Granger."

"And I no longer use that name."

"I see."

They circled one another warily, and then, when neither appeared about to take action, each Disapparated.

Unsettled

Unsafe

Retreat

Two years later, at a quiet beach near Chinaman's Hat on the lush, north shore of Oahu, a man body-surfed a wave inland. He gracefully rose to his full height from the water, tossing his wet hair from his face and almost staggered as he saw the bushy-haired woman wading into the warm water. He hardly noticed her bikini.

They stared at each other for a very long time. Once again Gryffindor brashness broke the silence.

"I left California to you."

"Obviously I didn't want it."

"I like it here."

"As do I."

"Perhaps we should come up with an agreement. You go west and I'll go east."

"I would prefer to go east, Miss . . . Mrs . . .?"

"Jane Black."

"I see. Was that for the shroud or in honor of the mongrel?"

"It matched my mood." She cocked her eyebrow expectantly.

"Sebastian Smith."

"Smith?"

"It is a common English name."

"And easily forgettable."

"Precisely."

The woman inclined her head and backed away. Just because a wand wasn't visible didn't mean one wasn't present.

Surprised

Survived

Escaped

Two years later, on New Year's Eve at the opulent Hotel Regent, Hong Kong, the ball dropped and red confetti sprinkled the air. A tall man with well-trimmed salt-and-pepper hair and a closely shorn goatee pressed the lift bell to reach his room.

The elevator arrived, doors opening to reveal the no longer bushy-haired woman. Clad in a cheongsam that showed, once again, she hadn't been a child for a many years, the woman, whose lively brown eyes assessed the changes in him, actually smiled a greeting. "I no longer wonder if just where and when."

"Perhaps we should choose a city for our next clandestine rendezvous."

Her eyes were suddenly haunted and remote. He had no trouble believing she'd fought on the front lines. She composed herself, and he admired her fortitude.

At last, she said, "Anywhere but Britain."

"Agreed. Cape Town, perhaps?"

"More surfing?"

"I have grown rather fond of the sport."

"It suits you. Individual achievement against the forces of nature."

"If we are matching sport to character, then something with a suitably large team would serve you well."

Her eyes flickered. "I no longer play with a team."

His heart ached. He, also, no longer had a team. "My apologies."

"Two years?"

"Indeed."

Speculation

Acceptance

Anticipation

Two years and three minutes later at Saunders Beach, one-hundred-fifty meters from her Bantry Bay accommodations in Cape Town, the bushy-haired woman sat alone on the rocky shoreline. No one could surf here.

She should have known better.

She did know better.

Her disappointment tasted like ash.

Rising from the rocks she turned to leave, only to be startled by the sight of the tall man she'd hoped to find.

He had been staring at her for almost an hour and had finally gained enough courage or fatalism to ask, "Why have you not handed me over?" His voice was almost a whisper, but the need to know resonated in its tone.

She smiled. "For the same reason you haven't alerted the *Daily Prophet* I'm still alive despite official reports to the contrary."

"Dinner, then?"

"That would be lovely."

"Where?"

"Vienna."

"When?"

"Your birthday."

His black eyes glittered at her as if reading her wounded, shattered soul. It was, in many respects, a replica of his. When he spoke, it was as if he'd agreed to an Unbreakable Vow. "Eight o'clock. The Sacher Hotel."

"Basic black?"

"But of course."

Reflection

Revelation

Exhilaration

At seven-thirty on a cold winter's night, January 9, at Vienna's famous Hotel Sacher Wein, home of the original Sacher-torte, Jane Black, wearing stylish namesake silk, sat

in the old-world lobby, her back to the entrance.

She needn't face the doors.

He would be there.

At eight o'clock, an elegantly suited Sebastian Smith stepped through the entrance. The black suit accentuated his shoulders and long legs, and, as he crossed the lobby, his progress was tracked by several women.

He had eyes for only one.

His present was waiting for him.

Reaching her side, he extended his hand. "We have reservations at the half-hour."

Once more the two looked at one another for a very long time. Brown eyes searched his face. Black eyes were unguarded and curiously vulnerable.

She took his hand.

They never made it to dinner.

They were never separated again.

Found

Kindred

Kindness

In the fullness of time, their previous lives faded to distant memory, entirely immaterial to their present or future.

Neither asked the other questions anyone else would have. It was entirely unnecessary.

They had already known the answers.

They had been cannon fodder.

In the year 2094, Mr. and Mrs. Sebastian Smith were killed in a freak surfing accident off their private beach near their home in Bali.

Three words were carved into their joint tombstone.

Comfort

Compassion

Love

~o0o~

Finite

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