

Know-it-All and the Traitor

by notsosaintly

Once upon a time, there was a girl who made a promise to the man she loved A fairy tale with a moral; a story of how Severus Snape survived Nagini's bite.

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Chapter 1 of 1

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Author's Note: Well, ladyinthecloak is mostly responsible for this challenge. Though, sunny33 once more was the one who came up with the crux: we mustn't use the word 'that' in the entire story. Needing a prompt...of course, because what is a challenge without a prompt?...ladyinthecloak declared she wanted a story of how Severus Snape survived Nagini's bite. Well, with such a prompt, you need to try to discover what hasn't yet been done. The fanfiction world of Harry Potter is huge, and while I cannot claim to have read all of the stories, I can hope my response is at least a little original.

Disclaimer: Message to JKR Severus Snape lives! She made all the money off him dying; I make nothing off him living. *shrug* Such is life.

Once upon a time, there was a man. He was a man of many talents, skills, and names. As a child he had been called 'hey you', 'rotten blighter', and once, when his father had been *really* drunk, 'good-fer-nothin'-bastard-I'm-not-even-yer-father-you-know'. He always remembered the unaccustomed swelling of his heart and piercing ray of hope at the inadvertent revelation, even if the subsequent punch tore it away less than a minute later.

As a teenager it had once again been 'hey you', 'hook nose', 'Sev', and 'Snivellus'...to which he always had an experimental hex itching in his wand. As an adult, 'greasy git', 'bat of the dungeons', 'Death Eater', 'spy', and 'traitor' made the list. The last shrivelled his heart like a fig and made him want to forsake the entire community he had devoted half his life to protecting.

The man had a role to play, and he played it well. He served two masters, and he served both masters well. He focussed solely upon eliminating the man who had destroyed the only woman he had ever loved...the only one to ever show him joy in this world was a possibility...until one day, while taking a stroll through the Forbidden Forest, where no sane wizard or witch dared go and all creatures parted upon hearing his footsteps ... except one.

This girl the forest chose to pass through unchallenged because she entered with no malice in her heart, only seeking the man whom she loved and who the forest collectively believed needed and deserved to be loved, and therefore left the girl alone. A number of names could be attributed to her as well, but the one dearest to his heart, and only because it had once held alternative connotations, was 'know-it-all'.

They met as often as possible and always in secret, for it would be unseemly for a Headmaster to be found in an illicit relationship with not only one so young but someone who did not share his supposed inclination toward the dark side. She used magic undetectable by the Ministry to meet him, for she was not only on a quest for things important to conquering the dark side once and for all but was also wanted by the corrupt Ministry and evil master he still served.

Their meetings were late at night and lasted long into the first rays of morning, until her absence would be questioned by her friends if she were to stay any longer. They loved each other much and talked even more, of the way life should be for a couple so in love, of hopes, and of promises.

The time eventually came when her quest was nearly finished, and what hadn't yet been accomplished had to be when the final pressure was upon them. The time was nearly upon them, the goal they had both been working towards. During their last visit together, she made him one final promise: no matter what it took, they would be together when it was all over. They spoke long into the night and well into the early morning, and finally he agreed to her plan.

When the moment arrived, and the castle was in turmoil with hexes thrown and bodies strewn, she found the one she sought, and with an illicit hex upon her lips lured him into the forest. The boy with blank, grey eyes and shaggy blond hair blinked at her under the spell but could not fight it, and she looked at him with head tilted, contemplating what she was about to do.

With quiet resolve, she placed her bag on the leaf-littered ground and pulled a flask from its depths, unstopping it. Holding it at arm's length, she ordered the boy to walk forward and take the flask from her hand. He stood there and held it, waiting for her next order, and she marvelled at how easy it was to hold him under her complete control and regretted she didn't have longer to take advantage of the situation.

Before ordering him to drink the contents of the flask, she forced him to listen to a litany of wrongs he had executed throughout his young life, culminating in how he allowed the man she loved to perform a deed most heinous in his stead. The boy stood wordlessly, staring straight ahead, having no choice but to relive his sins. Then she delivered his penance: to drink the contents of the flask and walk into Hogsmeade to meet the leader of the dark side as Severus Snape.

Obediently, the boy drained the flask and handed it back to her. As his body filled out, elongated and grew, bent in some ways, darkened in others, she withdrew attire appropriate to his newly acquired body. She watched quietly as he shed old clothes for new and waited. When he was through and standing once more silently but obediently, she kept reminding herself of her promise, and the end result was the only thing keeping her from changing her mind and walking away.

Before she sent this boy to do the deed of a man, a man who would soon be ousted as a traitor to the dark side and killed, she did one last thing. From a small phial held close in a pocket, she withdrew several silvery strands with her wand and deposited them into the boy-cum-man's brain. Then she ordered him to go forth, meet the evil one, and pay his penance. She took only a moment to watch him walk along the path towards his fate, then went to join her friends in battle.

When she reached the Shrieking Shack with her friends, she was more than happy to let the Chosen One take the lead. It was he who had to fight in the name of the light, more than any other. They crawled through into the room where their professor lay, bleeding profusely from the neck. She made a show of attempting to help, but the most important thing was to make sure the memories were released at the proper time.

To make sure none of the disguised boy's memories would be accidentally mixed in, she took control, as she always did, and persuaded the correct memories from their temporary resting place and back into the phial she had still held close in her pocket. The group waited until death overtook their professor's body, but she hung back as they left, looked around to be sure no one would see, and incinerated the body.

It was after the battle was finished, the wounded properly cared for, the dead not yet properly grieved, when she slipped away while others' attentions were elsewhere. Only one last item of any importance remained in her bag: a Portkey. Holding tight, it whisked her away to a location both had spoken of often but hadn't dared put too much hope in ever seeing.

She found him waiting, anxiously pacing the edge of the cliff upon which a small cottage stood, waiting for word she had survived, waiting for word 'he' had not. She watched him for a moment, her heart swelling with the knowledge it was she who caused such worry, and knew she had made the right decision.

He spun suddenly, seeming to sense her presence, and was not disappointed. With great strides, he reached her, looked at her intensely as though she couldn't be real, and then enveloped her in arms eager to hold the joy of unhindered love. Their lips met as though it were the first time, and he held her, and he spun her with great glee and a laugh for the world to hear. He was finally free of following agendas not his own, of masters whose talents lay in manipulation, of names he had long ago grown out of.

They held each other for a long time and talked forever until the wind whipped them cold and the cottage lured them in with warm tendrils wafting from the chimney. Finally, without a care left in the world, they walked slowly indoors, hand in hand. And they lived happily ever after.

The End

Moral of the Story: If you can get somebody else to do it for you, take advantage of the situation.