

A Great Fall

by tonksinger

Can what was broken be put back together? A drabble series based on the nursery rhyme "Humpty Dumpty."

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Chapter 1 of 1

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Written for grangersnape100's "nursery rhyme" challenge.

Humpty Dumpty sat on a wall.

The decision had to be made now. To disregard the plan in favor of his own desires could spell disaster for the war. Two words. And he had to admit part of him yearned to do it.

But to carry out this... execution... would mean being branded as a murderer, hunted and loathed. It would split his soul and leave a scar in his essence that he would always feel.

Dumbledore waited by the parapet. He seemed to sense the deep quandary, but spoke only two words to Severus. Two painful, simple words that goaded him into action.

"Severus... please."

Humpty Dumpty had a great fall.

Pain shot through Severus with the incantation, ringing in his nerves as Dumbledore was thrown from the tower by the Killing Curse. It was not only the emotional pain of having killed someone who, manipulative as he might be—*might have been*, had been a friend to Severus at times, but wrenching physical pain in his chest.

As though his soul was being torn apart by murder. Casting the Killing Curse damaged both people involved.

Pushing back the pain, Severus seized a paralyzed Draco by the scruff of the neck and fled down the steps.

Two more words. "It's over!"

All the King's horses and all the King's men...

Hermione Granger wiped the sweat from her brow and slumped against the wall. Severus Snape still fought every time someone came near him with a wand, and restraining him grew harder as he recovered strength.

Strength, but not consciousness. According to all the tests, he was physically whole. The snake bites had healed, his blood was replenished, nothing was wrong with him.

Scholars and Healers from around the world had thrown up their hands after mere days of trying to work out what kept him comatose.

But he still sensed magic and fought against traces of it.

She was desperate.

Couldn't put Humpty together again.

Late one night in the St. Mungo's library, Hermione discovered a possibility.

People with damaged souls who undergo near-death experiences may never fully return. The rate of recuperation is negligible, and each case is completely unique. However, introduction of the patient's memories, pre-trauma, have been known to assist.

Hermione jumped from the desk and sprinted to Severus's bed, where he lay sleeping. Frenzied ideas sped through her mind.

One word snagged her attention. Maybe.

"Always," she whispered in his ear.

Acting on primal feeling, she pressed her lips to his.

Then Hermione sat down to wait. To watch. To hope.