

# Taking Farewell

by beaweasley2

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Chapter 1 of 1

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*For you, Notsosaintly, during your time of loss. You have my deepest sympathies.*



As I Take Farewell by beaweasley2

*I didn't have a chance to say goodbye. There was too much going on, too much danger in lingering. He was right outside and war was looming... I know. It's just an excuse. But I—*

I sigh, knowing that I was wrong not to do anything.

*I should have tried something. I didn't know what to do—all that blood... Harry said you'd died, he said he saw the life leave your eyes.*

I sniff loudly, but I don't care. There is no one around to hear me.

*But I left you—I left you there on the floor. Without taking the time to do anything for you, we left—I left. I can't tell you how much that thoughtless act haunts me. I see you when I close my eyes. I see you when I hear your name. I see you whenever I see a wizard in a black robe walking away. I can still hear your admonishments when I brew. I can still remember the red corrections you'd put on my essays whenever I proofread one of my papers and reports. I still hear your voice calling me a silly girl or insufferable know-it-all when I quote a book—when I answer a rhetorical question.*

*You don't know this, but you made me strive to be the best. You pushed me to excel and expected perfection in my work. Because of you, I am the witch I've become. And I never thanked you.*

*We never found you. We—Harry and I—did go back to the shack, but you were not there. I looked. I tried every tracing and locating spell I knew to find you. I went to the library to see if there was one I didn't know. But no matter what I tried, I couldn't find you.*

I sigh heavily, my shoulders drooping slightly.

*Harry and I petitioned the Ministry, the Wizengamot, to give you your Order of Merlin. We refused to accept ours until they honored you. We didn't go to any award parties or ceremonies—*

*It worked.*

*Order of Merlin, First Class. See? I have it here for you. You even received the Albus Percival Wulfric Brian Dumbledore Medal of Honor for Special Services to Wizardkind — not that I think you'd care about that one. The ribbon is red and gold, hardly what you'd favor.*

*Harry and I placed this gravestone for you. It seemed appropriate to place you here where you died. Everyone knows now the sacrifices you made, the times you put your life on the line for us. You did that twice—right here in the Shrieking Shack, so it seemed like the best place. Ron wanted to place you next to Dumbledore, and the Ministry agreed with him, but we—Harry and I—said no. After all that Dumbledore put you through, all he asked of you in both wars, I couldn't see it. Not next to him. So that's why your marker is here.*

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Hermione looked up at the Shrieking Shack and remembered the time Severus had followed them to protect them from Remus. He'd been so brave, facing what he personally feared to save their lives. He had gone there to die and had held onto life long enough to give Harry his memories so Harry would know what he had to do.

She turned her head to look at the gravestone.

*In memory of the bravest man I know* was carved under the oak branches on the top. Under his name they'd had the following inscribed:

Master of Potions

Professor of Potions and Defense Against the Dark Arts

and Headmaster of Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry

Order of the Phoenix

Sworn Protector of Harry Potter and the students of Hogwarts,

mentor, colleague, friend, warrior, hero

She used her wand to make a deep hole in front of the gravestone and placed a cigar box in the hole. The cigar box contained items she'd found in his desk at the school, mementos, and things Harry had added, including a picture of his mum. Next she placed a blue velvet box containing his Order of Merlin and Order of the Phoenix medallions, and a red velvet box containing his Dumbledore Medal of Honor.

With a flick of her wand, the dirt filled the hole and compressed, leaving no evidence that the ground had been disturbed.

She stood there, staring at the shadow of the gravestone, knowing that he didn't really lie beneath the dirt that the gravestone marked as his grave. Her eyes welled up with tears and fell down her face, and she wiped them away on her sleeve.

A crow squawked in the tree behind her, unnoticed by the girl.

A squirrel skirted by and ran up the nearest tree, unseen.

A shadow shifted by the large rock where Harry had sat and cried once, but she didn't register its presence.

With a deep sigh, she looked up at the sky and then looked at the shack once more. Tears streaked down her cheek again, unchecked.

She stepped forward and gently placed the bouquet of flowers from her garden in the vase buried up to its lip in the ground before the gravestone. "Thank you, Severus Snape. For everything. You will not be forgotten."

She stood, taking one last look around as if to commit to memory everything she'd ever done in this place, to cement the events this place would always evoke in her heart, before she Apparated for home.

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A twig snapped. The soft crunch and grind of boots on dirt and rock could be heard.

The wind picked up a leaf that swirled in the air and came to a stop, as if frozen against a solid form, before fluttering away.

If one looked just right, if one knew what to look for, he might see the soft shimmer of light not bending as it should in the very spot that the girl had evacuated.

There were no sounds except the birds, the leaves as they flitted and floated by the breeze on the ground and rustled on the branches of the trees, and the distant bark of a dog.

Suddenly, a soft crack broke the silence, making the birds take flight in fear.

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