

# Stopper Death

*by quaffswinegaily*

Severus stoppers death.

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*Chapter 1 of 1*

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Snape knew this was the end; having stalled Voldemort for as long as possible, he could do no more. As the magical snake container lowered over his head, a sneer lifted the corner of his mouth. He was convinced he was prepared for death, but despite his certainty, anxiety-induced nausea made him pale and clammy, and his pulse pounded in his ears.

The order to kill was spoken quietly, and the snake attack was fast and vicious. Snape's lips parted involuntarily, pulling back from his teeth in a prolonged scream. As venom seared through his veins, his hands scrabbled to remove the snake's cage. Crumpling to his knees on the dirt floor, his head swam with the dizzying pain. Worse than the Cruciatius Curse, he could not have predicted such overwhelming agony.

When Voldemort's nonchalant wand-flick relieved him of the serpent's presence, Snape pitched forward onto the ground. Blood pulsed through his fingers as he tried to staunch the flow from the ragged wound in his neck. He could feel his life force slow down to a sluggish ooze with his heart's increasingly feeble beat. Shutting his eyes, he tried to compose himself. The more he struggled, the greater the blood loss would be, and the closer he would come to death. With Voldemort's departure, he allowed his body to relax, slumping on the shack's floor.

*Stay calm. My arrangements are all in place; all I need to do is stay calm until the mediwitches find me. I can bottle fame, brew glory, and even stopper death.*

A faint, tight smile pulled at his lips as the speech he gave every year stole into his mind. If Dumbledore's plan was playing out as it should, those dunderhead students would be fighting their way to victory, and he would live to experience his freedom.

"Harry!" An anxious, feminine whisper disturbed his train of thought.

Snape cracked an eye open but could see no one.

*Hallucinating. It must be a side effect of the potions I took.*

Out of nowhere, Harry Potter and his loyal Gryffindor followers appeared. Snape's eyes widened in horror.

*No! Not Potter! He's supposed to be out there duelling Voldemort, not in here.*

As Harry leaned over him, Snape grabbed the front of his robes, the wound in his neck sucking and gurgling as he tried to shout at the boy.

*Get out, Potter! Idiot!*

Concerned green eyes gazed deep into his, and Potter's lips moved, but Severus couldn't quite catch the meaning of his words. His head swam, and his vision greyed a

little around the edges as he tried to concentrate.

Hands patted the front of his robes in an agitated search. The red haired boy pulled small packages from the pockets in his robes and, reading the labels, shoved the ones he thought would help in Harry's direction. The Potter brat's hands shook as he administered a poultice to Snape's lacerated skin.

Another pair of hands dipped into his breast pocket, drawing out a small phial.

"What do you think this one is, boys? The label says *For Death*."

"Open it and pour it into his mouth."

*No! Not that one! Take it away!*

"Take... it..."

"What's he saying?"

"I think he said, 'take it.'"

"Give it to him, then."

The small, black flask paused in his line of sight as the girl struggled to remove the stopper.

"I can't get the cap off."

*No, you stupid witch! Take it away!*

"Take... it..."

The top popped off, and a silver-grey mist trickled out over the glass lip. Fear gripped Severus as he watched the contents seep away, and his heart started to race and stumble. Silvery strands started to trickle from the corner of his mouth, gathering pace until they gushed from every orifice.

*Look what you've done!*

"Look... at... me..." His breath whispered from his trembling lips.

Frantically, the students tried to gather the life-forces spilling from the dark wizard as he lay dying on the dirt floor. His eyes grew blank, and his grip on Potter's robe slackened as the flask filled to the brim with silver.

*I managed to stopper death... and these dunderheads... removed the cork...*

A/N: Thanks to sunny33 for the beta work. Her suggestions that I may be evil, and should give Snape some valium for his anxiety, have been ignored.