

The Parting Glass

by shatteredrose

A scene between three unlikely friends.

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Chapter 1 of 1

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Sadly these characters are not mine; I only get the honor of borrowing them for my own devices. I hope that you enjoy this short piece. As always, reviews are loved and welcomed.

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The three unlikely companions hunched over their drinks in the dank Muggle pub, each lost in their own thoughts of the upcoming final battle. Finally, the one with her bushy brown hair wrestled into a knot at the back of her head spoke, staring into her beer as if it held all the answers to their problems.

"Does it truly have to be this way? I simply do not understand why you cannot join us now, Severus."

Her two companions sighed. The man in question continued to stare at the stained pub table as if he did not hear her. The other man, in a tattered jacket and with thin graying hair answered in his stead. "You know why, Hermione. The Dark Lord must think that Severus is his man to the very end. As much as we three hate it, it's just a risk he has to take."

Hermione finally looked up, not at Severus, but to Remus. Eyes desperately staring into his, she sighed. "I just wish it could be some other way." She paused to turn to the man in question and gently rested her hand upon his arm. For once, he did not jerk away and lifted his eyes to meet hers. If she had not known him as well as she thought, she would not have believed the brief terror in his eyes before he clamped it down again. "I wish there was a way to make sure that you survived, Severus. After everything you've done, it seems foolish to me for us to send you in there unprepared."

Severus huffed and pulled his arm away from her. "I am not unprepared, girl. I know what I'm facing, and it's time I do."

With that, the three of them returned to brooding over their drinks; sounds of the busy pub filled their silence. Finally, the time had come for Severus to leave them; as he stood, Remus hailed the server for one more round. "One moment Severus, if you will?" Remus asked respectfully.

Severus nodded, and returned to his seat. "Make it fast, werewolf."

The server plopped the pints down on the table, and Remus paid their tab. Looking at Hermione, then Severus, he raised his glass. "I raise to you: The Parting Glass."

Severus' eyes widened briefly, and he raised his own glass. Hermione quickly joined hers with the men's glasses.

Severus spoke softly, glancing between the two, "Since it falls to unto my lot, that I should rise and you should not, I will rise and call, good night and joy be to you all."* After touching their glasses together, they all took a drink.

Severus nodded to them and stood; Remus clasped his arm before pulling him into a brief hug. Hermione's hug lasted a bit longer, and if it was more than a little

desperate, Severus was not going to say anything. With the feeling he was beginning his walk to the executioner, Severus pulled all of his emotions into him, creating a cloak of indifference that had seen him through so many years of uncertainty.

Stepping out of the pub, he hesitated. It was bitterly cold, too cold for snow. As he gained his courage to leave, the pub's door slammed open, and his step away instead whirled him to face the door. A body slammed into him, wrapping its arms around his waist. The hair gave her away, and he relaxed and allowed himself to return the embrace with just as much terror and desperation that he felt from her.

"I know you've made a lot of promises," she said, her face being buried in his chest muffled her voice. "But just promise me that you'll try to live. That's all I ask."

Severus pulled away from her and tilted her head up so that he could look at her. "I used to want to die in this battle. I had prepared myself for it, even. Lately though, that outcome has become more terrifying. Not because I do not want to go through the act of dying, but because I am finally realizing what I might miss if I were to die. I wish to create more happy memories, Hermione, so for you and for myself I promise that I will try to survive, if you make me the same promise."

Hermione was not sure if he was implying making memories with her, but she chose to believe that he did because that is what she wished with all of her heart. Cupping his face with her hand, "I promise, Severus, to try to survive this final battle. I, too, wish to make more happy memories." Standing up on her toes, Hermione kissed his cheek solemnly.

They parted, and Hermione offered a weak smile before Severus Apparated into the night. Hermione hugged herself for a moment, before turning to rejoin Remus in the pub. She did not care about any of the other promises Severus made in his life; the promise to survive was the promise she hoped he could keep.

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The quote that Severus recites is from the traditional Irish song, "The Parting Glass". The first appearance of the song in its entirety was in 1770, but many acknowledge that it was written as early as 1605. My personal favorite recording of this song is by The High Kings.