

The Resurrectionist

by Lady of Clunn

Snape is the last one.

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Chapter 1 of 1

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Disclaimer: I do not own anything associated with Harry Potter; I do not earn money by writing this story.

The grime on the burker's hands left muddy, hand-shaped prints on top of older stains on the shrouds. Soil. Saw dust. Something much more sinister that had dried in brownish smears.

Drawing his robes tightly around himself, Snape kept his distance from the filthy grave robber. The morgue was pristine. Grey granite scrubbed and Scourgified until its tiny pieces of adamsite gleamed and sparkled in the flickering light of the many torches set in their cressets on the walls. Only the windows were dark with layers and layers of years without washing.

"All fresh 'n all. Worth much more than two Galleons a piece!" The snatcher crouched away from Snape as if preparing to bolt at any second.

"Is that so? I think you should be very pleased to receive any remuneration at all. After all, it is only due to our Lord's infinite goodness that you are allowed to make yourself useful. Who knows, you might very well have been the harvested instead of the harvester." He glanced meaningfully at an empty, stone-hewn necropsy table.

"Certainly, Master Snape. Certainly." The burker scampered away like the rodent he was. Snape idly wondered why poor Mr. Hare had been bypassed so cruelly. The name would have fit like a glove.

Five. Fresh, as the burker had said.

Slender, supple ones. Wasted youth. Lost.

The shrouds tore away easily, their damp, coarse weave no match for his wand or hands.

He worked as always. Efficient, effective movements revealed smudged skin, ragged and torn around fatal wounds.

Some of the inner organs would be damaged but still there was the chance for a good harvest. He started with the body in the worst condition lest the ingredients spoil. The lancet cut through skin and muscle, revealing soft, precious parts that would serve in potions and rituals sinister. Better not to dwell on it. Cutting, grafting, breaking. Mindless work, the kind he liked best nowadays.

The air was rank with the smells of dead human.

One after the other was relieved of any usable parts until only empty skin and shards of bones were left.

Severus used his wand to sew them back into their body bags.

He was tiring, feeling the strain of living through the numbness that he had hoped the hard work would induce.

There, the last one for today. He brushed brown curls away from the white face to begin with the eyes and stumbled back.

No!

He had thought her dead. Long dead. To know that she had been out there for weeks... fighting... hiding...

Severus had to brace his hands against the edge of the stone table. So young. He remembered how he had carefully followed the sorting of all the Muggle-born students, carefully planning how he would make his disdain for every single one of them show in the eye of the public. To his dismay, he had seen her wave her hand in the air to the very first question he asked in his lesson. Knowing that he would have to trample on that shining thirst for knowledge rather than nurture it, he could not help but feel resigned.

Yet, if anything, she had been only fiercer in her quest to gain his approval, to hear a single 'well done' from him. Of course, she never had.

He felt heavy inside. Throughout her formative years, he had belittled and humiliated her. He was not entirely certain that he would be able to deal her the final, ultimate insult of literally cutting her up for potions ingredients.

The monger would be suspicious if he did not hand over enough ingredients to have come from five bodies.

With a deep breath, he grasped a fresh scalpel and hovered it above her skin, hesitating to make the first incision.

The lancet touched the white skin of her sternum. Then it didn't.

Annoyed with himself he forced his hand to steady.

Touch. No touch. Touch. It was not his hand that was moving.

She was breathing!

With two long strides he was at his small potions cabinet, frantically scanning the phials, scalpel forgotten on the floor.

Reaching in desperation for a dose of *Pepperup*, as there was nothing else even remotely useful, he froze.

Time stilled. His long fingers already stretched out toward the little phial, they curled in, the motion slow and hesitant. He reached into a small pocket inside his robes. The surface of the crystal decorated with spiralling patterns fitted in his hand as it always had.

The way back to the... to *her* felt much longer than before. A stool came scraping over the stone floor for him to sit.

So peaceful.

There was nowhere to go. He had even lost Spinner's End, not that it would have been safe. Grimmauld was the residence of the Lestranges.

Against expectations, the Dark Lord had not given in to his vanity and created a class of slaves. Plans had been devised, worst case scenarios been created. Uprisings planned with Severus the one to weaken the reign of terror from within.

Only, the worst case was so much worse than any of their scenarios had been.

The Dark Lord had no use for an army of slaves, nor any interest in spending his time guarding his enemies. After all, slaves could rise up, children could foster the seed of revenge for their parents and whores could turn on their souteneurs.

Silently, Severus had watched his friends and allies die one by one. None of them had compromised his position, none had pled with him for mercy, always hoping that somebody would still be there in the end, that Severus might be useful.

To anyone who cared to look Severus looked indifferent to their screams while inside, Charity Burbage and Albus chanted a never-ending duet of *Severus. Severus, please!*

With the efficiency of an industrial slaughterhouse, The Order fell.

Take me with you! Don't leave me behind!

Struck with horror, he had often contemplated how it was possible that he was the last one.

Not anymore.

There was nowhere to go.

No way to flee. No Apparating, no Floo, no Portkey. Borders closed, streets monitored.

The swirls cut into the phial caught the light and shimmered in rainbow colours. For the first time since the night he had brewed its contents years ago, he pulled the stopper.

Gently, as not to frighten her, he pushed down on her chin with his fingertips, causing her lips to part.

His thumb brushed over her lower lip. So soft.

The colourless liquid seemed to cling to its container, unwilling to part from it. *Still time to tip the phial back upright! Still time to stop* only to suddenly race along the smooth surface to the rim and hurtle down to fall between her waiting lips. Another and another followed.

Done.

He took her hand in his and felt his panic burn like a flame stoked by the endless seconds of waiting.

Two seconds. Maybe he could run to the cabinet at the other side of the room and retrieve an antidote.

Three seconds. There was no antidote.

Four seconds. But he could try! A bezoar? Useless. But he could try!

Five seconds. He pressed her palm against his cheek.

Six seconds. What had he done?

Seven seconds. His eyes were stinging. His heart was hammering. Oh gods. Oh gods. This was no *Avada Kedavra*.

Eight seconds. His tears were no Phoenix tears.

Oh.

Oh, no.

Eyes round with astonishment and fear, she held his gaze.

Feeling his own fear down to his bones, he held her hand.

Recognition stole over her face and her features relaxed. Her eyes softened and closed. The fingers in his hand were limp, without the finest trace of blood pulsing through them.

"This is a meagre yield for five! Are you keeping the best bits for yourself, Snape?"

Sneering, he turned to the monger.

"Of course, I do, Murcurry! After all, it is I who brews the Dark Lord's potions. The yield is less this time because one was infested with a Muggle disease, rendering the parts entirely useless. I'd be happy to hand them over to you, if you would care for contracting an exotic pestilence. Do refrain from coming to me for a cure."

The monger snatched up his crate of shrunken jars and flasks before Disapparating without so much as by your leave.

Satisfied that he had dodged discovery once more, Severus turned back to watching the body snatcher load his cart.

One pristine, white shroud stood out among the pile on top of the burker's handcart.

He would never know which ditch was to be her final resting place.

It was a risk of course, to use the clean, fine cloth for her. But this day had made him numb against the danger. The loss of his egress liberating him in ways he had never anticipated.

When the body snatcher picked up the handles of the cart and threw his entire body weight into moving it along the cobbled street, Severus stood for a long time, watching her being taken away.

The wind was cold in his face as he watched the new first years float across the black, shimmering surface of the lake. The older students had already marched into the Great Hall in lines of three. No-one had told them to walk in lock-step but they had done so nonetheless.

How quickly these young minds grasped the nature of the situation. How easily would they be cowed, their young backs bent until they would be unable to stand up for themselves. How effortless to meld and twist and contort these souls.

Underneath his billowing teaching robes his hand closed almost painfully around an object in an inner pocket. Intricate spirals cut into finest crystal. Of course, he could not feel the soft strand of golden brown hair lying curled within.

He was the last one and he would continue to be useful.

A/N: Medical researchers of the 18th and 19th century were in constant need of fresh bodies. The demand was met by 'resurrectionists', who often robbed fresh graves and sold the bodies to universities. When this became more and more difficult due to heavy guarding of graveyards, some resurrectionists turned to murdering people in order to sell their victims. The most famous were Messrs Burke and Hare in Edinburgh.

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