

The Afterlife of Severus Snape

by Moreteadk

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one-shot

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When Severus woke up, he was alone. The last thing he remembered from before losing consciousness was Nagini and a prime view of her bared fangs. It seemed there had also been something to do with Potter, but that couldn't be right. What would he have been doing in the Shrieking Shack at such a time? Shouldn't he have been busy fighting the Death Eaters?

Severus groaned and steeled himself for the process of rising. He felt surprisingly well and free of pain, but he suspected that might be venom-related numbness. Gritting his teeth, he pulled himself upright and almost fell on his nose when it required much less effort than anticipated. Much less, in fact, than it should have, even had he not just been mauled by a snake and unconscious for who knew how long.

Something was not right. Something was terribly wrong. Even with numbness from the snake venom still in his system, he ought to still be in at least a little bit of pain, but there was nothing. Absolutely nothing. Not even the twinge in his right knee he had lived with for close to twenty years after a tumble down a flight of stairs one night following a few lapses in judgement and two or three drinks too many.

Severus looked down at himself. A large puddle of blood pooled on the floor, and his robes were covered in some sort of silvery substance. They also appeared to be transparent. In fact, his whole body seemed to be transparent, and he could easily see someone's foot through his leg.

Well. That certainly explained the lack of pain and the substance covering his robes. With Nearly Headless Nick in mind, Severus carefully reached up to feel the wound on his neck. Two large, long gashes ran down one side of his throat, but at least his head should stay on his shoulders. Small comfort, he supposed.

This was most vexing. Nobody had ever truly been able to explain the mechanics of who would become a ghost or who would simply just die. Attempts had been made, but nothing had ever been proven. The most supported theory was that the witch or wizard chose it in life, but Severus had certainly never made any such decision. He rather thought that if anybody deserved a peaceful rest, perhaps even a pleasant afterlife, it would definitely be him. Instead he was stuck here in the same old hellish existence, only this time in a form that was significantly harder to destroy. As a ghost, it wasn't like he could just choose to jump off a cliff and end it all. He couldn't even kick something in frustration, however much he wanted to. The attempt made at the remains of a wooden crate on the floor only resulted in an undignified stumble when his foot failed to connect and the highly unsettling sensation of being passed through.

First things first, though. He needed to find out how much time had passed. Perhaps the battle still raged, in which case he needed to find Potter. He had tons of strategic tidbits he could offer the boy against Voldemort, and this time the maniac had no means of stopping him. What could he do? Kill him again? Hardly likely. Not to mention that even if he could, Severus would much prefer being properly dead rather than this indefinite ghosthood.

With no pain holding him back, he tried to stride purposefully from the room, but that didn't work either. He couldn't stomp properly, and no matter how hard he tried, his robes refused to billow. There had been little fun in the world before, and now even that had been taken from him. Instead he had to settle for floating quickly, which wasn't quite the same at all. It also quickly became apparent that the sensation of being passed through, or rather passing through things, was one he would have to get used to. His non-corporeal hand couldn't grasp the door handle, and Severus couldn't simply stand around waiting for someone to come and open the door for him.

Once outside he shuddered, trying to shake the feeling off, and set off for Hogwarts. From this distance it looked remarkably normal. Nothing indicated that a battle had or was taking place there at all, which, once again, made him wonder how long had passed. Perhaps he had been lying dead for years before coming back as a ghost? But no, his body would have looked rather different if that had been the case. It couldn't have been more than a few days at the very most, most likely less.

As he floated towards the castle, he wondered if he could actually get there. Some ghosts were bound to wherever they were haunting, while others came and went as they pleased. Most of the Hogwarts ghosts could not leave the school, but the Fat Friar had arrived from a nearby monastery some six hundred years ago, returning to his old House. Severus didn't know what made the difference, and it hadn't really interested him before either. He really hoped that he wouldn't discover that he had been tied to the place where he died. In spite of the Shrieking Shack having a reputation as the most haunted building in Britain, he would actually be the only real ghost there. There would be plenty of peace and quiet, but an extraordinary degree of boredom as well. Besides, he also did have to find Potter.

To his relief nothing happened, and he arrived at the castle gates to see that the battle had already been fought. There were corpses here and there, and survivors working on clearing the worst rubble away and moving the bodies and wounded into the castle one by one. Others were simply milling about, looking lost. None of them noticed Severus, even as he floated across the court yard. None, except for one.

"Professor Snape!"

He suppressed the urge to sigh at the sound of her voice. He had rather hoped he would get to talk to an actual adult before anybody else, but on the other hand, where she was, Potter was likely to be nearby. Turning around, he steeled himself for her accusations. No doubt she was going to lay it into him for even daring to show up here, dead or not. She thought, or at least ought to think, that he was the enemy.

"What is it, Miss Granger?" he asked, trying for as much patience as he could muster. Normally he would prefer to defend himself by attacking first, but he knew that this was something he would have to face sooner or later and figured it was better to get it over with.

Rather than anger, however, her face was pale and wet from tears. "It didn't work..." she whispered. "You died."

"What are you talking about? Where's Potter?"

"I gave you all the dittany I had. And bezoars," she said in a small voice, coming closer. "I tried to save you. I'm so sorry!"

Severus frowned at her. She had tried to *save* him? She was supposed to hate him. He had worked hard on that. How had his cover been blown? Granger wouldn't weep so openly over the fact that he was dead if she didn't know the truth. Was it her actions that had tied him to this ghostly existence?

"Why in the world would you attempt such a thing?" he asked.

Granger hesitated before answering, clearly surprised by his question. "You... you were about to die. We saw your memories."

"What memories?" His frowned deepened.

"About Harry's mum. You gave them to him, so he would understand..."

He shook his head slightly. He didn't remember having done any such thing. The last thing he could remember before waking up as a ghost was the inside of Nagini's gullet. It did sound like something he might have thought to do, though.

"Where's Potter?"

She pointed towards a large hole in the wall, directly into the Great Hall. "In there somewhere, I think. I don't know where exactly."

"And Voldemort?"

This made her smile. "He's dead. Properly dead this time, Harry says. The snake is dead too."

Severus nodded and turned away from her. First he wanted to find Potter, and then he would have to find out who had done him the great favour of dispatching Nagini. As he started to float towards the Great Hall, he considered that perhaps there was an advantage or two to being a ghost. If there was an afterlife, at least this way he wouldn't risk having to share it with Tom Riddle.

The End.

Notes: The first bit of anything that I've written in years! Well, written and *finished*, mind you. Thanks to Gelsey for betaing for me and to Dickgloucester for suggesting the tip that made it possible for me to finally finish something in the first place.