

Full Circle

by odogoddess

Another look at a pivotal scene from Deathly Hallows. WARNING: contains major DH spoiler

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Chapter 1 of 1

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Author's note: for chazpure, Irene Candy and our friend K, who all wanted some hope for our Snape. :)

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The snake's fangs sunk deep and Severus felt his knees tremble. He fell to the floor. If Voldemort stayed with him, he was truly finished.

"I regret it." This was all the Dark Lord had to say.

Snape almost believed this, but was still profoundly grateful when Voldemort left the room. He only had a few moments, possibly seconds. He *had* to somehow get to Potter or, barring that, survive to get a message to Potter!

He had no idea if the Dark Lord's suppositions about the damnable wand were true or not, but if they were, then he *had* to live to thwart them, to give Potter a fighting chance. However, since Voldemort wanted him dead, he still had to somehow give that appearance long enough to give him time to recover from his wounds and be able to be of some service to the Order. If one of the Death Eaters was sent back to check he was dead, he would have to appear so.

Snape had been taking antivenin whenever he had been summoned directly to Voldemort for nearly two years now. He was not worried about the snakebite, but about blood loss and how it would affect his mind.

He managed to fumble the pastille he had made of Draught of Living Death out of his robes. Pastilles were far easier to carry than vials of potions and elixirs; he could thank the Weasley twins for demonstrating this so handily.

The Draught would make him appear dead, necessary to fool the Dark Lord, but it would also stop his body from requiring the oxygen-rich blood currently pouring from him, at least long enough to, hopefully, allow him to wake when it wore off and heal and, more importantly, *act*.

He swallowed it whole just as he heard a rustling sound and futilely tried to press his fingers to his gaping wounds, hoping to staunch some of his vital blood. Someone was coming.

Good. Whoever came would witness his "death". He would ask to be taken to the castle. With luck, Potter would come to verify his nemesis was, indeed, dead.

To his shock, the Boy Who Continued To Live stepped up and into the room, followed by his bushy-haired sidekick. No doubt the redheaded menace was somewhere behind. He despised an audience when he was in such straits, but there was no help for it.

He fought his body's helpless reaction and bleak thoughts. He had lost so much blood! The pastille might not work. He could still die. It was conceivable the boy or his counterparts might hasten their hated Professor's end. He hoped against hope the boy was, at least, willing to listen.

He was glad when the boy bent over him curiously. His vision blurred for a moment and his body would not stop trembling. There was so little time!

Severus ignored his bleeding wounds now, to grab Harry's robes, and pulled him close.

To his horror, a gurgling sound emerged from his throat. Had his voice box been damaged? But no, it was the Draught, and he fought the hope this realization raised in him; after all, his hopes had been dashed so many times before.

He ignored the effects of the Draught to rasp out, "Take... it... take... it..."

Did the boy understand him? With the last bit of his strength, Snape forced the memories free. What the boy would need, as well as the answers he had sought and that none had given him, leaked from him like mist. Harry had the right to know his mother, to know Severus had thought more of her than what he'd accidentally seen in the Pensieve that time. He had the right to learn the truth.

His vision was fading in and out, and he had never been so glad for Hermione Granger's presence as he watched her Conjure a flask and give it to the clueless boy who, at least, had the sense to gather the memory filaments and place them inside.

Snape nearly smiled, but his muscles were starting to ignore him. His breathing was nearly stilled.

"Look... at... me..." he whispered, but he was not sure if the boy even heard or, if hearing, would understand.

He wanted this boy to look not just at the memories, but also *at him*, to understand what had shaped him and brought him to this. He might never have another chance, so he took it, even if Potter still vilified him for his choices. Hopefully, the boy would understand when he finally realised that the only memory Snape had truly needed to give him was of Dumbledore's instructions to him. Hopefully, Harry might come to understand the fullness of the gift he'd just been bestowed. Like so many of his hopes, it was faint and fleeting, but Severus accepted this now as he accepted death – with surprising contentment.

The Draught finally took full effect, and Severus Snape slipped into the welcoming black with the comforting thought that he had done all that he could, that the boy had the knowledge he needed to finish things, to bring an end to the war and the Dark Lord's life.

If he woke again or did not, it no longer mattered. He had fulfilled his chief objectives and, in so doing, struck one last final blow against the dark.

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post-A/N: I like to think Snape would find it fitting to swallow Draught of Living Death, which is mainly asphodel in an infusion of wormwood, plus a small amount of valerian roots and sopophorous beans (per HBP). As I have noted in a [previous livejournal post](#): Asphodel symbolically means death, esp. death of someone beloved to the person who offers asphodel. Asphodel is also a lily. Wormwood symbolically means bitter sorrow. So in essence, the first question Snape ever asks Harry in class is if he knows what death wrapped in bitter sorrow is. Put another way, he might have been trying to tell Harry that he loved her and that he bitterly regrets Lily's death. Given Snape's habit of imbuing layers of meaning to things he says, plus Rowlings love of symbolism, I'm almost positive that is what is going on in the scene.

So here, I give him the means to swallow or accept his past even whilst giving him the possibility of a future.