

Moving On

by Krysanta

After his death, Severus Snape finds out he has a choice.

Redemption

Chapter 1 of 1

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"What happens when I move on?"

"That's up to you," said the man behind the desk. He smiled pleasantly, but there was something routine to his demeanor, as if he had been in this job for too long.

"Where do I go? How will I move?"

Without looking, the man pointed vaguely over his shoulder. Snape looked beyond him and saw the brilliant white mist that engulfed the office-space part, revealing a huge glass window which gave a view onto a vast airport. Dozens of white planes stood docked, like huge swans. Snape saw one of them taxi-ing slowly out of sight while in the distance a plane lowered itself gracefully onto a landing strip.

Snape startled as something brushed the side of his head. A piece of paper whirled past him and landed neatly on the desk before him. It was a plane-ticket, the name Severus Snape stamped neatly on it. Beneath it was printed the destination, a long exciting word. Snape could make out all the individual letters of it, yet he could not comprehend the word as a whole.

"I assume you want to move on?" the man asked.

"Of course I want to move on would you judge I have had a life worth lingering over?" Severus said agitatedly. The prospect of flying away, far away from it all, made him impatient to leave.

"All I'm saying is," the man said, "that there are options open to those who feel that it is not quite time yet to continue their journey."

"And what would those be, to end up like a ghastly ghost? Scaring the younger students at Hogwarts? I think I did my share of that."

"That would be an option for the long term, but there are less dramatic possibilities: you might still want to visit a loved one, check that they're alright..."

"No one is alright at the moment."

"... or offer consolation, a last message, maybe even a helping hand, depending on the strength of the connection made during life..."

"I have no loved ones left alive..." Snape's voice trailed away as a thought seemed to occur to him. Then he focused back on the man.

"I could still influence the living?"

"To an extent, yes, as I said, it would depend on..."

"...the connection, yes, I heard you. And after that, I could still board a plane?"

The man looked a little befuddled. "A oh, it is a plane for you? Yes, you are free to move on when you feel ready to."

"Let's not waste time then. Send me back."

"It is not a matter of me sending you. If you wish to return to the mortal plane, you just have to will it. In your mind, you see, it's all in the "

Snape shot the man a last irritated look and was gone before he finished his sentence.

Time was not the same for him now, nor was being. He knew who he was, he had a sense of self and even a lingering feel of a body, although he could move effortlessly to wherever he directed his mind. Back to the battle, to Hogwarts, to the One with whom he had a connection deeper and blacker than anyone else ever...

Voldemort rejoiced. The boy had been slain! Snape felt the feeling of victory as if it was his own. Yet he felt something else as he directed his attention to the boy laying on the ground. The air around the body was pulsating, throbbing with silvery light... Potter was alive!

There was still apprehension in Voldemort's mind, Snape felt as he entered the Dark Lord's thoughts and feelings. Oh, Legilimency was so much easier now! Triumph swelled, but something was still keeping it at bay...

There's nothing to fear anymore, Snape whispered inside Voldemort. The boy is gone, nothing stands in my way, I am safe, I am Lord, the last barrier has been taken, I can release Nagini now, we are safe, we are conquerors...

Voldemort strode in front of his Death Eaters to the castle, wearing the great snake Nagini around his shoulders, who was now free of her enchanted cage.

Snape felt nothing but weariness as he watched the dead and the crying as Voldemort announced his victory. Suffering had become familiar to him. As had the role of inconspicuous go-between. For so long he had been in the darkness, despised by most, feared by some, while he was secretly working to save them. There would be no gratitude for him, no recognition although he had known that all along, it still made him surprisingly bitter. Death had made it final.

Action was demanded now. Between Potter's friends he searched and felt for the bravest of them, the one who just might be able to stand up to the Dark Lord without sully his pants. He descended with all his presence onto the awkward boy whose valour shone brightest, not allowing himself to feel surprised to find such sentiment in someone he had always judged mediocre but focusing only on pressing his will: leap forward! Attack!

Neville Longbottom needed little persuasion, and even the Dark Lord was impressed by the fierceness of the young, slightly overweight man. How to punish him, how to punish him, Snape whispered inside Voldemort, ah yes, let's use the precious hat, seeing that turned against them will break their little hearts...

The Sorting Hat flew through the air in the half-light and landed in Voldemort's hand. A second later, or so it seemed to Snape, the hat was on a Stunned Neville and burst into flames. Then a distant uproar swelled and many things happened at once. The Potter-boy finally moved, but before that, Severus was already in Neville's mind. Take the Sword! Take the Sword! The snake, kill the Snake!

A glimmer of satisfaction coursed through him as the great snake's head spun high into the air, gleaming in the light flooding from the Entrance Hall. He heard Voldemort's scream of fury as the snake's body thudded to the ground at his feet. And in an instant he knew this was it, this was the last Horcrux. It all came down to Potter now, heaven help us all...

Snape hesitated as chaos spread. His resentment of Potter was greater than ever, now that he could also blame his own death on him. And Potter lives! Soon he will be bragging about this feat, which was no doubt another stroke of luck undeserved luck for Potter, the boy who won it all: the fame, the popularity, the girl...

Better make sure he has time to brag, Snape groaned, and made himself plunge into Potter's mind, effortlessly, the boy had obviously still not learned Occlumency.

"*Protego!*" roared Harry, and the Shield Charm expanded in the middle of the hall, and Voldemort stared around for the source as Harry pulled off the Invisibility Cloak at last.

There was no relishing in the cheers as he became the center of attention, there was just Voldemort. Snape felt his own hatred blend with Harry's: you killed her! You killed Lily Evans! You destroyed my life!

They circled and talked, Snape felt Harry's mind rushing towards the inevitable, final attack, but he slowed him down. Maybe, finally, here was his chance to redeem himself in the eyes of the wizarding world.

"I brought about the death of Albus Dumbledore!" Voldemort screamed at the insolent boy, who dared to doubt his power and cunning.

"You thought you did," said Harry, "but you were wrong."

Snape was surprised as he felt Harry's thoughts rush past him: there he was, Snape himself, his face swam before the mind's eye, accompanied by a deep feeling of reference and awe. Awe? Potter?

There was no time to linger on petty sentiments. Snape thrust himself forward, taking over Harry's mind. Finally, he would tell Voldemort the truth. There was no resistance; it was as if Harry stepped back for him and let him speak:

"I wasn't yours. I was Dumbledore's. Dumbledore's from the moment you started hunting down Lily. And you never realised it, because of the thing you can't understand. You never saw me cast a Patronus, did you, Riddle?"

It felt good to address the one who had been his Dark Lord for so long by his human, mortal Muggle name. Snape spoke directly to Voldemort, but he knew the words came out as if Potter spoke about him.

"My Patronus was a doe, the same as Lily's, because I loved her for nearly all my life, from the moment we were children. You should have realised, I asked you to spare her life, remember?"

Snape felt Voldemort's mind fill with doubt, rage and realisation. He felt in every mind in the Great Hall a dawning comprehension, and his presence grew as he was remembered by so many.

Snape was Dumbledore's man all along!

Snape loved Lily Evans!

Snape loved?

Harry took over, rambling on against Voldemort about the flaws in his plan, while deep inside him Snape connected with the charm Lily had left in her son. Her son. Not James Potter's son. The son of Lily Evans, the woman who could love completely, the woman who would have loved him completely if only he had not been such a self-centered fool. Her love engulfed him now, and he felt washed clean of bitterness and resentment.

"I'd advise you to think about what you've done... think, and try for some remorse, Riddle..."

Remorse washed over him, a great wave of all the things he had done wrong and how he would have done them right, if given another chance. And he felt in the mind and soul of Lily Evans' son that he was forgiven, that this boy understood the power of remorse, and that Lily would have too.

Overwhelmed, Snape lost his hold on Harry's mind, and he watched in astonishment as the boy dared Voldemort to attack him, hoping that his theory was right, that it was really him who was the true master of the Elder Wand.

Voldemort's mind was filled with doubt, but greater than his doubt was his rage the rage of a caged animal who feels death approaching.

A red-gold glow burst suddenly across the enchanted sky above them, as an edge of dazzling sun appeared over the sill of the nearest window. The light hit both faces at the same time, so that Voldemort's was suddenly a flaming blur.

He's going to do it now! Point your wand!

"*Avada Kedavra!*"

"*Expelliarmus!*"

The bang was like a cannon-blast and the golden flames that erupted between them, at the dead centre of the circle they had been treading, marked the point where the spells collided, Voldemort's curse against Harry's protective spell, enforced with all the mind-power Snape could muster.

Tom Riddle hit the floor with a mundane finality, his body feeble and shrunken, the white hands empty. Voldemort was dead, killed by his own rebounding curse.

Severus Snape and Harry Potter stood side by side, staring down at their enemy's empty shell.

A/N: Some parts of the above are directly and literally, or with a little modification, taken from Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows by JK Rowling, chapter The Flaw in the Plan.