

A Better Decision

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Chapter 1 of 1

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Disclaimer: I don't own the characters, but I do love using them in stories, even without making any Galleons.

This is for my friend Soul Bound as a birthday gift. I hope you have a great day, my friend. Here's a little Snape and Harry interaction for you.

Thanks go to amsev for the read through.

Harry pushed the covers away and moved so that his feet were once again hitting the cold floor. He'd just had a dream that nearly twenty years had passed since the final battle with Voldemort had taken place. In that dream, all of the things he'd always wanted most had happened: Ron and Hermione having a family and him having one with Ginny. For some reason, it didn't sit well with him. Something wasn't right. Something was nagging at him, dimming his hopes for the future.

Frowning, he reached over to the bedside table for his glasses, which were placed just next to the plate that had held the sandwiches Kreacher had brought him. "Kreacher," he called softly.

Crack! "Master calls for Kreacher? He wants more to eat, does he?"

"No, Kreacher, nothing like that." Harry stood and stretched. "I'm wondering... Since I've come to bed, where have the dead..." His voice cracked as he remembered all of the bodies he'd seen...Lupin, Tonks, Fred, Colin, so many others. "Are they still where they were?"

"Some are. Master wishes to see them?"

"Yes, but can you tell me how many people are still about?"

"There are many wizards and witches here still, sir. Many have gone of course." His large, saucer-like eyes widened even more. "Documenting things, they say...even the bad ones."

"Thank you, Kreacher. Sorry to have called you."

"Does Master want his fire lit?"

"No, that will be all."

After the house-elf disappeared, Harry quickly found his clothes...washed and pressed already...and his shoes. He had to see for himself what was being done. Why were

they all still there?

Was Snape given the same care as the others?

Snape. He swallowed thickly. He'd been wrong about him all along; the memories had proven that. Snape never had been kind to him, but Harry had not been kind to the man either. He only wished that the man had lived so that he could give him a grudging thanks if nothing else.

Snape had been in love with Harry's mother. It certainly explained a lot of things.

"And here I thought he didn't have a heart."

Harry put on his trusty Invisibility Cloak and made his way out into the corridor. He didn't meet up with anyone until he reached the Entrance Hall. Aurors, family members, staff, and Ministry officials were milling about. Off to the far side, Harry was certain Madam Pomfrey and Professor McGonagall were huddled together and crying over a black-clad body.

Professor Snape.

It had to be.

Silently joining them without bumping into anyone, he looked down into Snape's pale face, which had been cleaned of the blood spatter it'd held only hours before.

"I'd called him a coward," McGonagall said sadly with a small sniff. "I had no idea. If he would have just trusted me... trusted someone... we could have helped him."

"His body temperature still isn't dropping, Minerva. I tell you it's like he's not dead. For some reason, I've the impulse to bring him to the infirmary to tend to his wound and give him some blood. It's as if that would make all the difference, like some magic is afoot, keeping him in stasis."

"You just don't want to see him dead, Poppy. Same as I. Not after what Harry said tonight." She stood and took the other woman's hand. "Come. We need to try to get Molly Weasley to rest. She's going to harm herself if she keeps this up."

"Agreed." The matron gazed back down at Snape for one moment, almost as if she'd changed her mind and intended to bring him to the infirmary anyway, but she turned to follow McGonagall into the Great Hall where they would likely find Molly Weasley.

What if Madam Pomfrey is right? Harry thought to himself.

He had to try. Looking around, he saw that nobody was paying attention to Snape's body, having other things to do or others to care for. He used his wand to cast a Disillusionment Charm and then flicked it to lift the body and guide it to the infirmary.

Hermione had used dittany on the bite Nagini had given him. He would try that and some Blood-Replenishing Potion... and some anti-venin. What would it hurt? If a nurse like Pomfrey felt there was hope, that there was some sort of magic keeping his body from starting to decompose, then it could be. Stranger things had happened. This was the wizarding world after all.

Dumbledore said that there's no way to bring back someone who's dead, said a voice in his mind that sounded much like Hermione's.

"He's been wrong before... about a lot of things," he mumbled aloud.

It didn't take long to get there, and much to Harry's surprise, the room was empty. It made sense, though, because anyone hurt was below or probably at St Mungo's. Placing Snape's body on a bed near Pomfrey's supply room, he took off his cloak. Finding the dittany, anti-venin serum, and Blood-Replenishing Potion, he moved back to tend to Snape.

After he closed the curtains around them and put a charm to keep anyone uninterested in looking and another that ensured nobody could hear him, he set to work on Snape. Pomfrey was right. He wasn't even cold and seemed to only be sleeping...if the wounds on his neck wouldn't be visible. Pale skin, yes, but he was always a little sickly looking. In a moment of uncertainty, Harry lowered his head and placed it against Snape's chest. Nothing.

He'd seen the light leave the man's black eyes. He *knew* beyond a doubt it was hopeless, but he, strangely enough, felt as though he owed this to Snape...to someone who'd tried to save his mum, who'd loved her.

My eyes were the last thing he wanted to see before he died, Harry thought sadly, feeling a little uncomfortable and awed at the same time.

An hour later, nothing had changed. He'd tried his best to heal the bite marks, pump him with the potions needed, apply the right salve, and nothing helped. Snape was still lying there as if sleeping, body remaining warm and limp.

"Snape, I know it's too late, but I just want you to know that I appreciate you. I appreciate everything you did for me... Well, for my mum anyway. See, the way I look at it is this," he said, gazing down at the man's still face. "You didn't mean to put us in danger the way you did, and when you found out you did, you agreed to help us...even my dad, grudgingly, but help him all the same. For my mum."

He reached down and smoothed a lock of hair away from Snape's eyes, wanting to see them clearly in case they opened, which he knew wouldn't happen but hoped all the same. "I wouldn't be alive today if it weren't for you, and I'm not talking about all the times you've saved my life. I'm talking about you asking Voldemort to spare my mum."

Harry grinned sadly. "You didn't care about me or Dad, but you asked that he spare her life. It's that one act that made him try to make her stand aside. See, she didn't have to give up her life to save mine, but she chose to, and that's what enabled that old magic to happen, rebounding the curse back on him."

Sitting on the edge of the bed next to Snape, he added, "If he'd just gone there without trying to grant you a favor to let her live, he would have killed her. He didn't mind killing anyone, and it was just as well to him. He wanted to kill all three of us, make things nice and neat. No ties."

Harry laughed cynically. "His one act of generosity is what did him in, the idiot." He stood. "I wish you'd lived so that you could hear this for yourself. We may not have got along, but after seeing what you went through, I wish you'd been able to go on and find peace. Thank you, Severus Snape."

Feeling his eyes watering, he wiped them on the back of his hand and looked down at Snape, gasping as he did so. The man's eyes were cracked open slightly.

"Snape?"

"Lily," he said, eyes squinting.

"No, it's Harry."

With a small nod, the man closed his eyes again, and Harry frantically checked for a pulse or a sign of breathing. The chest was moving up and down.

"Bloody hell! It's... God..."

He's alive!

And then it hit Harry. The dream he'd had was just that and had only always been that...a normal family life, getting the girl he wanted, the perfect friends. He couldn't go through with it. He needed time to think, time to do what was right for himself for once. He'd always lived to help others and never for himself. He owed this to Snape.

Impulsively, he called, "Kreacher!"

With a crack, Harry's house-elf appeared. "Master calls?"

"I need your help. Go to Grimmauld Place, take away all the wards made to keep Snape out, and prepare a room on the top floor for him."

"Yes, sir," the elf said excitedly.

"Tell no one, Kreacher."

"Kreacher won't disappoint Master."

"Thanks. Go on. When you're done, come back for him, and then I'll go out onto the grounds and Disapparate there to meet you."

Life was going to be different.

He would take this time to help Snape, and in doing so, he would help himself. Snape might not like it, but there was a lot they could learn from each other. The others wouldn't have to know that the man lived yet. All they would know is that his body had disappeared mysteriously until Snape was ready to face the world...if ever. Maybe he'd only want peace.

Maybe that, too, was all Harry wanted actually. Only time would tell.