

Summoning

by chivalric

Snape lies dying on the floor of the Shrieking Shack, Nagini's venom rushing through his veins. Casting a summoning spell, not only one, but six helpers rush to his side.
And one enemy.

One-shot Story

Chapter 1 of 1

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A/N: My beta - pipedreamer, wonderful as always - sternly advised me to warn you that this is very AU and not at all DH compliant. I ignore not only who has died in the final battle, but the general flow of events as well in order to make this story work. Still, I hope you will enjoy it.

Special thanks go to SouthernWitch - she did an extra crosscheck which is always a mandatory thing for my stories.



It was cold. *He* was cold. Dying was a lousy way to spend the evening, Severus Snape had to admit. Though, if he was honest with himself, he wasn't overly surprised that the Dark Lord had decided to get rid of him. *I guess he neither liked nor trusted me, after all,* the Potions master thought sarcastically and tried to concentrate on breathing. It hurt.

Still, lying on the dirty, dust-covered floor of the Shrieking Shack was a quite unpleasant sensation, especially when one's blood was flowing fast out of one's body and onto said dusty planks. And the snake venom it was rushing through his veins; he could feel it. It was damaging his body with every weak beat his heart made. *Damn*

snake. Damn, gigantic monster!

What a dreadful way to die. So useless. So pitiful. So damn, bloody embarrassing. *Really, I should have stayed in the lab tonight.*

He hadn't seen this coming. He had walked into the trap with open eyes, for once in his life unaware of the danger lurking behind the snake-like face of his so-called master. And only because of a wand he didn't own and never had owned.

Idiot, Snape thought, taking the next breath. Blasted idiot and I was forced to call him Master! He wasn't even bright enough to simply ask what had really happened the night I killed Albus. I might have even told him; but no, he just walks around and kills me instead. Hopefully Potter is smart enough to finish him off!

How shameful that he was actually depending on the dunderhead. But then, no one would ever find out.

Dying was surprisingly painful, although the venom must have a slightly sedating effect otherwise thinking wouldn't have been possible anymore. The wound Nagini had ripped in his neck felt like the size of Hogwarts' gates, the amount of blood on the floor seemed like an ocean, and the venom would kill... *Hang on, Snape suddenly realised. I've got the antidote in my pocket. I just need to take it; then I can take care of the blood loss. How could I have been so stupid as to forget about it?*

Maybe because the sensation of bleeding to death and getting poisoned at the same time had hazed his mind?

Snape tried to move and found he couldn't. His fingers curled slightly and became slick from his own blood, he could move his eyes, and maybe he would have been able to curl his toes, but what good that would have done? He needed to reach into his pockets, get the phial out, and down the antidote if he wanted to see a new sunrise. Which seemed highly unlikely at the moment.

A summoning, then, Snape decided and tried to concentrate. A silent summoning, as I am not even strong enough to open my damn mouth.

It was hard. He hadn't any experience in dying, although the Dark Lord had punished him more than once into unconsciousness. So he was quite surprised how hard it was not to panic in the eye of death. On the other hand, Snape hadn't survived his role as spy for more than twenty years without reason. He could concentrate even under the most dire circumstances, and his abilities in silent magic were legendary. *Stop whining!* he reminded himself, put all his will together and carefully imagined a summoning to anyone who would be near enough to hear it. He was shaking inwardly from the venom, the cold and the pain, and the blood-loss, but he put that aside and willed his magic to work. Someone, anyone, was bound to react.

Come to me!

Had he shouted the words on top of his voice, the effect couldn't have been stronger. His body was shaken with the impact of the magic, but Snape knew instantly that he had been successful. A wave of relief washed through him. Someone would find him. Someone would be brave enough to save him despite the fact that he was a known Death Eater. *Maybe they will only save me now in order to execute me later,* he thought, but that was something he could handle when he was actually able to stand on his own two legs again.

Only, of course, if the right someone had heard his silent call. Maybe a fellow Death Eater would stumble into the Shrieking Shack any moment, finishing him off with a grin behind the mask. *So what,* Snape thought dreamily. *At least, I have tried.*

A tiny 'pop' distracted him from drifting into unconsciousness, and Snape found that the pain and the weakness were not big enough yet to hinder him turning his head only so slightly. In the shadows left of him he saw a movement. Someone small stood there. Was this someone swaying or was it his vision, becoming blurred?

A tea towel wavered into light. A tea towel stinking of butterbeer, being worn by a house-elf in a disgraceful state. A tipsy house-elf, Snape observed in disbelief. An utterly pissed house-elf, to be precise.

"Winky came," the house-elf slurred and stumbled. Falling to her knees, Winky came to rest right next to Snape's head. A whiff of different smells insulted the Potions master's crooked nose: butterbeer, sweat, an unwashed body, ash, and various food fragrances. But mainly it was hopelessness and despair the little house-elf radiated, a smell Snape knew only too well as he detected it on his own clothes every now and then.

Winky's eyes were wet with tears. "Winky came," she mumbled again, then went limp and dropped on the spot, felled by too much butterbeer, not enough food, too many sleepless nights and a general sadness that had claimed her since she had been freed.

Marvellous, Snape thought bitterly. *The one who hears me is the one who can't help me. Lucky me!* And he was getting weaker with the minute even small movement was not an option anymore.

Footsteps thundered in his ears; the floor shook under heavy boots, and a boy came flying into the Shack, shivering, pale, red-haired and with eyes huge as saucers. He was obviously very scared and dropped dead in his tracks when he saw the corpse lying to his feet. "Oh shit," Ron murmured and wiped his sweaty face. "Totally forgot about him."

"Dunderhead," whispered Snape, but his voice was too faint to be heard.

Ron cast a bewildered look round the tiny room. "Snape's dead, no one else here so who called?" he wondered aloud, his wand trembling in his hand. Every now and then he glanced nervously to the only door, expecting a Death Eater to storm in any moment.

When all stayed silent, he dropped to one knee and poked the dead body of his former teacher with the tip of his wand. "I hope you are really dead; otherwise you will kill me for what I'm doing here," he murmured and dipped his wand in the blood on the floor, swirling it slightly. Then he hesitated for a moment, grinned, and painted a moustache above Snape's snow-white lips. "You earned that, you greasy git, for six years of terror. And sorry that you're dead. I'll be shedding tears at your funeral, you being on our side and all."

Then he saw the unconscious house-elf and frowned. He saw her breathing and recognized the dirty rags. "Winky! Oy, Winky, wake up! Bad idea to sleep next to a dead Professor, he'll start stinking soon!"

He was just about to pick her up when Harry burst into the room, panting, white-faced, Gryffindor's huge sword in his hands, shaking and grinning all over his face. "He's dead, Ron, I killed him, I killed Voldemort!"

"Great, mate!" Ron screamed, and boxed his friend's arm. The sword clattered to the floor. "Sorry I couldn't be there I was chasing Bellatrix Lestrange with my mom. Would have liked to see the final fight, though, honestly!"

The house-elf was forgotten, and so was Snape, who would have liked to shake his head in disbelief had he been able to do so. *Hello, I'm dying here,* he thought, quite desperately, and wondered vaguely why the light was so dim before realising that his vision finally became blurred. *Blood loss and poison awful combination, worth to be avoided.*

Harry sighed deeply. "You know, everyone expected Voldemort's body crumble to dust, but it didn't because of Nagini. His snake is still on the loose hence the sword. I need to find her; otherwise Voldemort might manage to come back once more, with her being the last Horcrux. I just came to check if she's here I hoped she would like to have another bite of Snape." Dubiously, he looked over to the spot where Snape's body laid crumpled on the floor. "Although, come to think of it do snakes eat dead meat?"

Detention till the end of your life, Potter, Snape growled silently and tried with all his might to move an arm, his head, his damn eyelids. Useless. He was as good as dead. And Potter was too daft to even realise that he didn't come here of his own free will, but because his Potions master had summoned him.

"Let's get out of here, Harry," Ron said, looking round uncomfortably. "I know you said he was always on our side, but it still feels as if he could jump up any moment and snarl at us."

Harry nodded in sympathy. His feelings for the dead Professor were quite mixed up right at the moment, with the Potions master's shocking memories yet fresh in his mind. "Know what you mean, Ron," he said. Then he took a step and looked in Snape's pale face. "Uh," he said. "Now that must have hurt, what Nagini did to him. He looks as if he's still in pain."

I am, idiot! It hurts like hell and I will kill you with my bare hands if someone, anyone, finally manages not only to react to my summoning, but is bright enough to save my life as well!

"You didn't paint this moustache in his face, Ron, did you?" Harry asked, but a big smile was on his dirty, tired face.

Ron shrugged his shoulders. "Couldn't help it," he said, and burst into laughter.

Winky stirred, but didn't wake up. A voice from the door asked, "What moustache?"

Ron and Harry spun round simultaneously and saw Lupin leaning exhaustedly to the doorframe. The werewolf looked tired to the bones as well, and a big bruise showed on his chin. His hair was ruffled, his clothing slashed and bloodied in various places. "Merlin, what happened to you, Remus?" Harry exclaimed and went to support his friend before Remus could collapse to the floor.

I think, dying is the better way out of here. The grim thought shot through Snape's still very active and not at all dying mind. *I hope it is less crowded at the other side of the veil.* Then he gathered the last little bits of his strength and took another deep breath. He didn't want to die; he was simply too stubborn to give up that easily. *Maybe I'll wait a little longer,* he mused and felt blood trickling down his neck. *Maybe a miracle will happen and someone walks in who is in possession of a brain that actually works.*

Remus sank to the dusty floor and leaned his head back with closed eyes. "Greyback I finished him off. He had tried to kill Tonks. Couldn't let that happen, could I?"

Harry knelt next beside him and patted his shoulder. "Is she alright?" he asked anxiously.

Remus gave a small nod. "She's at the infirmary Poppy's looking after her," he murmured. "And why are we all here, anyway? Who summoned me? Was it you, Harry?"

Now Poppy is someone I definitely could use here, Snape thought, but unfortunately, the matron was nowhere to be seen. If only he could have drummed his fingers against the floor it would have freaked them out massively, and it would have calmed his not very stable nerves. Hearing them talk whilst he bled/got poisoned to death was nothing less but infuriating.

"What summoning? What are you talking about?" Harry replied. "I thought you came here to get Snape. His body, that is." He nodded to the corner, and Remus paled.

"Didn't know he's dead," he whispered. "Damn, I'm so sorry, Severus!" Getting up, the werewolf slowly approached his oldest enemy. "I should have told you that maybe, under different circumstances, we could have been friends!" Sadly, he shook his head and covered his weary eyes with his hand. Then he took a closer look. "Is that a moustache on his face?" he asked, unable to hinder his lips from twitching.

I will become a mass murderer if I survive this, Snape fumed. *Save my life, wolf, and I might forgive you for being a sentimental idiot!* But his strength dwindled, and he knew that he had only a few minutes left on this earth.

"Who did the summoning?" And yet another voice demanded answers.

Just throw me out so you've got some more space for your party Snape could feel a hysteric laughter lurking in the shadows, but nevertheless recognised the voice. He couldn't help a small spark of hope erupting inside him.

Harry and Ron looked utterly bewildered. "What summoning?" they asked and stared at Hermione who looked at them sternly.

"The summoning that quite obviously brought all of us here who was here first?" She walked in and examined the unconscious house-elf.

Ron tapped her on the shoulder to get her attention. "I was here first," he said. "Well, after Winky, I guess, but she was already passed out. And Snape is dead, and I didn't summon anyone. So you must be mistaken."

Hermione jumped up, fury in her eyes. "I am *never* mistaken," she snapped. "If none of you summoned me, then..." She whirled round to Snape and dropped beside his head. "Who painted that moustache in his face?" she thundered instantly, her eyes already spearing Ron.

Ron blushed and said nothing. He knew perfectly well that she would deal with him later, and he shuddered at the thought.

Hermione bent low over Snape and carefully touched his cheek. It was cold, but soft. "Professor?" she asked hesitantly, then touched his throat in order to find his pulse.

Remus, Harry and Ron shared an uneasy look. "Erm, Hermione, he's dead," Harry pointed out. "You were here, you saw him die."

Hermione didn't listen to him. Her fingers were searching for a sign of life, and when she found it, she couldn't believe it. "Has any of you actually *checked* to make sure?" she shouted, and even Snape would have jumped if only he could have moved a limb. "Because, he isn't, in case you haven't noticed!"

Clever girl, Snape sighed whilst relief washed through his tormented body. *I have to remember to add a few points to her house.*

Then he felt her hands all over him a strange sensation given the fact that no one had touched him in a friendly manner since... well, ages, actually. But she just unceremoniously ripped his shirt open, then let her fingers gently whisper over his ice-cold skin, let her hands lift his head in order to feel if something was tied round his neck. That caused Snape to moan with pain, and Ron fainted on the spot when he realised that he had managed to fiddle with his not-quite-dead teacher's facial state.

Remus had come to his senses as well and now knelt opposite her. "What..." he started, but Hermione interrupted him. "He summoned us," she said briskly. "That means not only that he is alive, but that he thinks there is a chance for him to survive Nagini's venom. I suspect he has an antidote somewhere on him. Help me searching!" Her hands were flying and now found their way into the Potions master's trouser pockets.

It tickled. And Snape thoroughly wished he were elsewhere one of his pupils getting *that* close to him without him being able to lift as much as a finger to hinder her was surely a reason to hide in the next mouse hole with embarrassment for the rest of the century.

"Here!" Remus cried and pulled a tiny phial from Snape's robes. Hermione snatched it out of his hands, uncorked it, and hastily dripped the content between Snape's lips.

The potion worked fast, woke up his numb limbs and allowed Snape to open his eyes a few moments later. Lupin and Granger stared at him. "Seal... the wound," Snape murmured in the precise moment Poppy Pomfrey stormed in, having reacted to the summoning and having assumed that someone needed her help.

"Aside with you," she shouted, shouldered Lupin and Hermione out of her way and cast a stitching spell before she had even dropped her heavy bag filled with medicines

and bandages.

Obviously, the antidote had removed the sedating effect as well as Snape's harsh screams filled the Shack, waking up Winky who passed out again with shock immediately. Ron stirred and decided that it was a lot better to stay unconscious for a little longer. Remus and Hermione held down the Potions master whilst the matron did her best to stop the bleeding and save the little life that was left in him.

"Done," she huffed after several minutes, and placed her hand on Snape's uninjured shoulder to reassure him that she wouldn't cause him any more pain.

Hermione, crouched beside the Potions master's head, brushed his sweaty hair out of his face. "That was brilliant," she said. "Doing a summoning, that is. If only I had been nearer, I would have been able to give you the antidote sooner."

"Just in time, Miss Granger," Snape whispered, quite surprised at having enough strength left to actually make himself heard. "150 points... for Gryffindor... should be appropriate... for saving my life."

Hermione grinned, snatched a wet cloth out of thin air and cleaned his face from blood, sweat, dirt and moustache. "Don't kill Ron, please, he thought you were dead," she said and shared an amused look with Remus who was equally relieved to see Snape still alive.

Snape growled deep and dangerously. He would deal with the Weasley boy as soon as he was able to stop shaking.

"You are really hard to kill, Severus," the werewolf grinned and helped the Potions master in a sitting position. Heavily, Snape leaned against his old enemy's shoulder, slightly trembling, but nevertheless more than glad for the support. His eyes wandered around the room, lingered on the blood pools on the floor and his own soaked clothes.

"The Dark Lord he is dead?" Snape asked, his voice hoarse.

Harry took a hesitant step and nodded. "Well, his body is very dead," he assured the ghostly looking man on the floor. "We burned it and your memories made it possible for me to win. Look, sir, I... I really want to apolo..."

"Potter," Snape managed. "Kill the snake behind you and we are even. Do me the favour before she feasts on me once more." His black eyes were suddenly filled with something close to fear and locked on a spot behind Harry's left shoulder.

Remus gasped, Hermione pulled her wand, Poppy stood in front of her patient to protect him.

Harry dropped to the floor, picked up the sword, swirled round and beheaded the giant snake with a smooth cut.

Her head went flying in a wide arch and landed with a heavy thump neatly beside Snape's outstretched legs. The Potions master couldn't suppress a shudder when he saw her venom-dipped fangs. "Thanks," he croaked and allowed Remus and Granger to pull him to his feet, away from it.

Harry, white-faced, dropped the sword once more. "If Voldemort hadn't tried to kill you... if Nagini had been successful... if you hadn't done a summoning, strong enough for even persuading Nagini to come back here..." His knees gave way and he sagged down to the ground.

"Pathetic, Potter," Snape murmured. "After all, it was just a snake."

"Into bed with you, Severus," Poppy demanded and picked up the unconscious house-elf on her way out. "And next time do an aimed summoning I would have been here in an instant, had you addressed me personally. Merlin, one would assume that there were some brains hidden somewhere in your skull you could have died here, you know!" With her foot she kicked away the snake's head and sent a burning spell after it. The two slimy halves of Voldemort's familiar vanished in green smoke, and with it the last Horcrux the Dark Lord had created.

Supported by Remus and Hermione, Snape staggered out of the Shrieking Shack, followed by Harry who had pulled Ron back to his feet. "I'll try to avoid this mistake next time I get killed," Snape grumbled. But when he saw the nearly full moon rising above Hogwarts, he smiled. It was even better than a sunrise.

I used the following prompt:

Severus is a Potions master, quite capable at nonverbal spells, Voldemort's potions brewer... Snape had the anti-venom on him. He had used Nagini's venom in many potions, so clever, cunning Snape built up antibodies to the poison. Only he's too weak (blood loss from the bite) to give it to himself... Who finds Snape and helps him?

A/N: The sequel is called "Stalking" - Snape finds a way to get back at Ron...