

Petals in the Wind

by Cecelle

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Chapter 1 of 1

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This was written for Romancing the Wizard, a Livejournal community. The challenge guidelines were for a rare pair (Lisa Turpin/Neville Longbottom), a spring-like setting, the prompt "cherry blossoms," an original spell, and exactly 500 words. Here, I am slightly over because I simply liked the version with a few more words better!

Lisa Turpin is only once mentioned in canon (during the Sorting.)

The day was incongruously beautiful, with puffy white clouds racing each other like spring lambs across a sky the color of a robin's egg. The mid-morning sun lit the blooming cherry trees until they fairly glowed with bridal splendor.

It wasn't right, Neville thought, leaning against a tree trunk as the breeze made white petals dance around him like unseasonable snow.

It was all too cheery. Too bright. Snape had always been one for the shadows.

"I wondered where you'd got to," a voice brought him out of his reverie. A strawberry-blond girl was standing next to him. "Everyone else's gone back to the castle, you know."

Neville shrugged diffidently. "Just didn't feel like going back yet."

He'd needed some time with his thoughts, hadn't felt ready to be part of a crowd again. Even if the crowd, in this case, had been quite small. There had been so many funerals over the last few days....

Lisa Turpin sat down next to him on the grass and idly twirled her wand tip. *Ordinatio Flosculi.* In response, the swirling petals gathered into a tight white cloud, hovering for a moment before shaping themselves into a pointillist butterfly. It flapped its wings – once, twice – before once again scattering to the wind.

They sat quietly, watching the petals blow away. "I read in a book that the ancient Japanese believed the souls of fallen warriors were reborn in the flowers of the cherry tree," Lisa said softly.

He cast an oblique glance at her. She was pretty. Very pretty.

"It's a nice thought," he murmured. Even if it did seem like an awful waste to be reborn only to die again a few days later.

The Ravenclaw wasn't looking at him, her eyes on the same black granite tomb he'd been watching. "It's a nice thought," she said. "But then – Snape would never consent

to coming back as something as dainty as a *cherry blossom*, would he?"

At that, Neville had to grin. "No. I suppose not."

She turned to him then, and they smiled at each other, an aching, knowing smile, a smile made of familiarity, and hardship shared, and storms weathered.

And then her cheeks turned pink, and her voice sounded too high pitched and too fast. "Anyway – seems I'll be going home tomorrow and... My mum lives pretty close to your gran, you see... And if you ever... Well, if you wanted to murder a cup of tea sometime... I was just wondering..." She looked away, the pink in her cheeks deepening.

She was nervous, he realized. Nervous about talking to him. The thought sent a sudden surge of warmth through him.

And – another surge, this one turning his own cheeks pink – she wanted to see him again. A pretty girl like *that*.

"I... I think I would like that," he mumbled.

Looking up at the tree, the branch above him now almost stripped of blossoms, it hit him. The wind might have carried the petals away – but that wasn't. Something had been left behind, something that would grow and ripen and get sweeter with time.

It wasn't an end. It was a beginning.

He smiled back at Lisa shyly. "I think I would like that a lot."

Many thanks to Bellegeste for Britpicking and beta-reading! I think if Snape had to come back as a flower, it would be something like a Night-Blooming Cereus: a spectacular blossom from a very homely plant, with dramatic flair and a few prickles.