

Volunteers

by julymorning

Snape and Kingsley Shacklebolt have a conversation at Grimmauld Place after the battle at the Department of Mysteries.

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Chapter 1 of 1

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Author's Note: This tiny fic, which leapt out at me and demanded to be written, is so called after the Jefferson Airplane tune. Some of you may know it from watching *Forrest Gump*.

They were standing at opposite ends of the kitchen at Grimmauld Place. Snape, for all his greasiness, looked immaculate in comparison to Kingsley, who was wounded and dishevelled.

'You should have been there. You should have helped!' Kingsley accused, picking up the thread of their never-ending argument.

Snape had heard it all before and said it all before, but he made another attempt to justify himself. 'I can't show myself fighting on the side of the Order!' he snapped. 'How many times must I remind you that my status as a spy does not extend to taking an active role against my ostensible allies?'

'Fuck your status,' Kingsley growled. 'Children are injured and a man is dead because we couldn't front enough Order members at the Ministry tonight.'

'It's not as if I did nothing!' Snape argued. 'You wouldn't have known to go there in the first place if not for my information.' He stepped forward, intending to intimidate, but Kingsley stared him squarely in the eye, unmoved.

'I'm sick of this,' he said wearily, rubbing his hand over his shaved head. 'We need you for more than information. We need you to fight! It's obvious now that we can get all the information we could ever want straight out of Potter's brain. How can you and Dumbledore continue to insist on keeping you out of battle?'

Snape drew himself to his full, imposing height. 'Are you suggesting I would prefer not to fight?' he demanded.

'No!' Kingsley slumped onto the bench next to the rough, wooden table. 'I'm not trying to say that at all. It's just... you're too good to be wasted as a glorified pageboy.' He dropped his head into his hands.

Gathering his robes around his body, Snape took a seat on the bench next to Kingsley. 'It's what Dumbledore wants,' he said quietly. 'I'm in no position to contradict him.'

'Dumbledore wants too much from you,' Kingsley said bitterly.

'I know.'

'Are you going to keep on with this farce, then?' Kingsley asked. 'Pretending to be a Death Eater, coming back here to tell us all of Voldemort's plans? As if they weren't obvious to everybody.'

Snape heaved a sigh. 'He has plans that aren't obvious. He doesn't take straight paths to achieve his goals. If you were Voldemort, you would barge into the Ministry, kill your enemies, and take over the government. You wouldn't be concerned with prophecies; you wouldn't fear Dumbledore or give a toss about a teenaged brat you'd once failed to murder. If you were Voldemort, I wouldn't need to be a spy. But he doesn't do things so simply, and neither can we.'

Kingsley faced Snape, his liquid-dark eyes half-closed with exhaustion. 'I'm surrounded by idiots. Sirius Black is dead because he was a damned fool. People were injured tonight, and Potter himself was almost killed, because Potter is an impetuous little shit who can't be bothered to learn from people who know better than he does. You're the only sensible person I know. And every time something like this happens, and I don't have your wand and your power and your intelligence beside me, I hate you just a little bit more.'

'Don't say that,' Snape whispered. 'You know there's nothing I can do. If I had the choice, I'd be there every time.'

'I know.' Kingsley leaned forward, his eyes falling shut. It was an open invitation, and Snape accepted it, meeting Kingsley's lips with his own. The kiss deepened immediately, fuelled by desperation. Kingsley's fingers found the edges of Snape's robes and tore them away from his body. 'I need you,' he said harshly.

Clothing fell to the stone floor of the kitchen. Their bodies pressed together, hard and demanding.

Kingsley kissed Snape's neck, his lips tracing a burning trail from ear to collarbone, while Snape groaned in response. 'When this is all over...' Kingsley said.

'No,' Snape interrupted, pushing him back against the table and leaning over him. 'When this is all over, I'll be dead.'

Kingsley stared at him for a moment, drinking in the sight of the harsh face and sinewy body of his lover. Then he shrugged. 'Maybe you will and maybe you won't. But for now, we're both alive.'

Snape climbed onto the table and kissed him again, hard. 'You're the only taste of living I get these days,' he said, taking a deep breath and expelling it, giving in to the weakness he was about to admit. 'Now shut up... because I need you too.'