

Take his hand

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Take his hand

by [Dunderklumpen](#)

Summary

Neville was still crying, but managed to do so silently.

Charlie was sure that nobody would have minded. They all understood how desperate and sad the boy must be. How alone he had to feel after his gram was gone, leaving him with two parents in St. Mungos who were out of their minds; not even able to identify their names, much less their own son. Neville was practically an orphan now and Charlie's heart went out to him.

Notes

This fic was originally meant as a fill for digthewriter's prompt "realistic situations" for rarepair_shorts at LJ.

I saw the prompt and this fic was what immediately came to my mind. I wrote it down in an hour and thought that it was good... until I saw that under digthewriter's "dislikes" was "death". - Damn!

So this fic is inspired by the prompt but not an actual rarepair_shorts fill. So I'm posting it outside of the "wishlist summer 2017" event.

Still... I hope the rest of you like it:)

P.S.: Not a major character death but a character death nonetheless. That's why the archive warning.

The weather was hot, sweat pooling on his forehead, his clothes stuck uncomfortably to his body. Thank God he didn't need to wear black. Although the purple he had opted for wasn't any better either. One of Mrs. Longbottom's last orders were that nobody should come in black. No, they should come in happy colours and celebrate the life she had had. Not mourn her death.

In theory that was easier said than done.

Charlie was standing on the outskirts of a large group. All kinds of people, mostly wizards and witches, were gathered in the small chapel. Some of them were even standing outside. The doors opened wide to let them see the small display with a picture of the deceased and some of her favourite items. Charlie was standing outside as well, getting only glimpses of Neville who were sitting in the front row before the picture and Mrs. Longbottom's wand and favourite cloak. Everything was draped on a small pedestal while there were pictures of a deep green forest in the background. It looked a little bit like the magic forests he heard fairytales of when he was a child.

Ron had mentioned that Neville's gram wanted to be cremated and her ashes should be buried in the Forest of Dean. She had always loved nature and in death she would return to the circle of life.

Charlie liked this idea of becoming one with the world again, so that out of death new life could emerge. The only thing he was a little surprised by was the birch trunk standing behind the picture and next to cloak and wand. He shrugged... probably a symbol of her final resting place.

He blinked, avoiding the sweat dripping in his eyes. It was unbearably hot and he was dreading the wait until the ceremony was over. At the same time Charlie had a bad conscience. He hadn't known Neville's gram very well. But he had met her a couple of times over the years. She was a witty woman with a sharp tongue and laugh lines around her eyes that betrayed her stern look. He knew from Ron that Neville had adored her and he took her passing very hard.

His gaze wandered back to Neville. He was sitting in the front row, watching the wizards and witches stepping towards the small altar to raise their wands in a final greeting. It was their last goodbye, showing respect and friendship to this formidable woman. A woman that had left behind a grandson who had to feel utterly alone.

An old wizard slowly made his way to the altar. He seemed fragile and unsteady on his feet, his age clearly showing. Another wizard jumped to his side and tried to support him but he refused the help. Instead he made his way to the altar, stopping in front of the picture while swaying on his feet.

Neville had watched the spectacle. But only when the old wizard was trying to reach the picture and almost fell, he rose to his feet. Steady and calm he went to the wizard's side and took his arm. The old man turned his head, obviously ready to reprimand the person who

wanted to help him without asking. But when he saw Neville all fight drained. Instead of yelling at him he patted his arm.

The old wizard raised his wand in goodbye. Then he said something to Neville. But Charlie couldn't hear it. He was too far away to make out any words. Instead he saw how Neville started to tremble, his whole body slumping in on himself. And then he heard them, deep guttural sobs echoing through the chapel. Breaking out of him in forceful waves.

He had been so calm. Stoic in the face of all the sadness until now. Whatever the wizard had said to him, it had gotten to the boy and opened the floodgates.

A chill went down Charlie's spine despite the swealtering heat. It was absolutely terrible to see someone suffering like that and not being able to do anything about it.

Still crying Neville accompanied the old wizard to a chair. Then he went back to his own, clearly struggling to calm down again, to not make a show of himself and his emotions. His eyes were glued to the floor and even the well-meant touches of his friends didn't help. Neville was still crying, but managed to do so silently.

Charlie was sure that nobody would have minded. They all understood how desperate and sad the boy must be. How alone he had to feel after his gram was gone, leaving him with two parents in St. Mungos who were out of their minds; not even able to identify their names, much less their own son. Neville was practically an orphan now and Charlie's heart went out to him.

He couldn't imagine how it had to be for him, the only one of his family left. Yes, losing Fred in the war had been terrible and the grief had choked him down. But he had his parents and siblings to fall back on. To share in his grief and help to overcome it. Neville had nobody.

The queue of people was nearing the end. What followed was pretty standard for a funeral. A speaker gave a short speech about the deceased and beckoned the crowd to follow him to the gravesite. Neville rose and went to the altar. He picked up the birch trunk and carried it to the grave. With the sudden urge to laugh Charlie understood that this thing he had been starring at the whole time hadn't been a birch trunk at all but the actual urn. Trust Neville's gram to choose an urn which didn't look like one at all. And trust him to be totally clueless about it.

He followed the crowd, still blending into the background. He hated funerals. Not only were they a sad affair but he always felt like he hadn't the right to be there. Like he wasn't important enough to the deceased to say a goodbye. True, he had barely known the woman but he was not here for her. He was here for Neville, to show his support and be there in case the young man would allow it.

Over the years Neville had become something like an honorary Weasley. Harry, Hermione and Neville were fixtures at every family gathering and Charlie had formed a friendship with the guy. He liked Neville and seeing him like that tore at his heart. He wanted nothing more than to hug all of Neville's grief away. To stand next to him and squeeze his hand in a show of solidarity and understanding. Instead he was hovering at the outskirts, unsure if his sympathy was even wanted. This wasn't one of Ginny's romance novels where the main character would welcome him with open arms. That was real life. And the reality was that

Charlie didn't dare do all the things he wanted to. It was ironic because he was a Gryffindor and still couldn't find the courage he needed.

He knew exactly why he was craving to comfort and protect, why he wanted to make everything better for Neville. But these were thoughts for another day and place. Something he wasn't willing to contemplate here and now, not at a funeral surrounded by grief and sadness. Instead he was wiping the sweat from his brow and fighting the urge to take Neville's hand.

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