

Title: Ghostly Demise
Written: 8/24/2017
Revision: 1.3, 8/16/2023

Summary: The Dark Lord has died but cannot face death.

Timeframe: The morning after the Battle of Hogwarts
Audience: PG
Category: The Untold Story
Warnings: none
Length: 7 pages

Ghostly Demise

Chapter 1 -- Awakening

It was pain such as he had never experienced. It was agony, beyond endurance. He burned. He thrashed and flailed against invisible surroundings. He felt he was moving but could not see movement. He saw nothing but blinding light that he could not shut out. Screaming filled his being. It was his own voice, and more -- other voices crying out in agony too, hundreds, no... *thousands* upon *thousands* of other voices.

The voices were getting louder; they were getting closer. Incredibly, his torment was increasing. How much worse could his agony possibly get? The screams of the others were now drowning out his own screams. They seemed to be calling him. They wanted him. They were hungry for him. He was terrified, terrified of joining the others. He would be consumed. He knew it.

He had to get away; he would do *anything* to get away. He could not go on...

The blinding light started to fade. The screaming began to diminish. And for the first time, his agony seemed less. Also, for the first time he could think beyond his own pain and terror. He willed the changes to happen faster -- even if it meant oblivion and utter nothingness.

It seemed to take forever, though without any reference, he was unsure of the passage of time. He did not seem to be breathing. He could sense no heartbeat. All he knew was that as it got darker and quieter, his pain was fading.

After what seemed hours, he was in total darkness. Everything was silent. And finally, he felt no pain. In fact, he felt... nothing. He imagined himself floating but motionless.

He was *Lord Voldemort!*

What had happened? He was confused. The last thing he remembered was dawn breaking over the sill of a window and a flash of green light.

Then his own killing curse had *rebounded* upon *him*... *NO!!!*

How had it happened? How could it have happened?

Then he remembered it all. The memories flooded over him like a raging river.

No! No!! *No!!!* It could *not be!* He was the Master of Death. He could *not* be dead. No, it was *impossible!*

Then he remembered the blinding light, the screaming thousands and his incredible agony. He shuddered. The mere thought of it terrified him as much as the experience itself. *That* had been *death* -- an eternity of increasing agony.

But if he had escaped it, it had to mean he was *not* dead after all. Then, where was he?

He willed himself to become aware of his surroundings. In doing so, he opened his eyes. He saw the low stone ceiling of a small dimly lit room. He was lying on his back. He stood up... except that he floated up into a vertical position rather than physically standing up. It shocked him. He could not feel anything, but he could see and move.

He looked down and gasped. He could see his feet. They were transparent and floating just off the ground. He could also see the feet of a body lying on the floor beneath him.

He twisted around in panic and saw *his* dead body lying on the stone floor. It lay unevenly, as if carried there and dropped roughly and uncaringly. He stared in disbelief. He held up his transparent hands in front of his face and wondered at them.

“We guessed we’d be seeing you again,” said a voice behind him.

Voldemort whirled around.

All of the familiar Hogwarts ghosts were floating clustered along the wall.

Chapter 2 -- Realization

“I am a *ghost*,” said Voldemort. It was not a question. He was still looking at his hands. Then he said, “I *have* conquered death.”

“You have done nothing of the sort,” said the Bloody Baron derisively.

“All you have done is to prove your *fear* of death,” said the Gray Lady.

“How *dare* you...” growled Voldemort angrily.

“Do not start with us,” chided the Fat Friar. “You have no power over us... or *anyone* now.”

“You are barely more than nothing at all...” said Nearly Headless Nick. He was the one who had first spoken. “...a poor imitation of life... as Professor Dumbledore would say,” he added.

Voldemort bristled at hearing Dumbledore’s name. “Lord Voldemort is the greatest Dark Wizard who ever lived. He will find a way to rejoin the living. He did it once; he will do it again. His faithful followers will do anything necessary to assist in restoring him to a body. And he will not share his secrets with the likes of *you*.” He glared at the ghosts while arrogantly folded his arms.

“Did he always talk in the third person, or is that something new?” asked the Fat Friar with a wink to his fellow ghosts.

“You are a fat insolent pig,” sneered Voldemort.

All the Hogwarts ghosts laughed. Voldemort was shocked.

“Is that the best insult you have?” laughed Nick. “Do not worry; you will have *plenty* of time to practice.”

The Gray Lady joined in. “It is going to be so much fun watching the students of Hogwarts dealing with you from now on. I can just picture it...” She changed her voice to imitate a young girl and chirped merrily, “You mean to say *he* was the Dark Lord? I do *not* believe it... He looks pathetic. Look at those dirty nasty robes. I bet he *never* washed... *He* had the most powerful wand in the world and could not beat a *little* boy...”

Voldemort seethed. “If you think I am going to remain here, you are badly mistaken. I shall seek out my followers and resume my quest...”

“You are not going anywhere,” interrupted Nearly Headless Nick. “You cannot leave this castle for one hundred years. Only then can you seek out another place to haunt.”

“What are you *saying?*” asked Voldemort, now looking uncertain for the first time.

Nick answered him. “Ghosts must haunt the place of their death for one hundred years before they can go anywhere else.”

“Nonsense!” declared Voldemort.

“Well, *that* is an exterior wall,” said Nick, pointing at the wall to Voldemort’s right. “See for yourself.”

Voldemort immediately floated to the wall and pushed against it with his hands extended. He was repelled backwards towards his body lying on the floor.

Voldemort was shaking his head slowly from side to side in disbelief as he turned slowly to face the Hogwarts ghosts.

“I told you... It is supernatural law,” said Nick knowingly.

The Fat Friar, who was standing to the rear of the other ghosts, whispered so only they could hear, “Good thinking, Sir Nicholas, ...and for not mentioning the exception -- dedicating your afterlife to haunting *one* person.”

Nick nodded appreciatively. The last thing he wanted was the ghost of Voldemort haunting Harry Potter. The young lad had already been through enough torment of Voldemort’s doing.

The Gray Lady opined loudly, “I can assure you there is no better place for a ghost to be than Hogwarts. However, you need to find a role here. The student houses are all taken, of course. I suggest you adopt the kitchens. The house-elves could use a patron... But if that is not to your liking, I suppose you *could* haunt... the Chamber of Secrets.” She smiled sarcastically.

The other Hogwarts ghosts sniggered.

Voldemort now looked distressed. For the first time he was at a loss for words. This could not be happening -- the humiliation of it. It was almost worse than death.

Then the Bloody Barron said, “Is it just I, or does he look a little... *off?*”

The Gray Lady whispered excitedly, “Dumbledore told us this might happen. I did not believe it myself. His soul must truly be *too damaged* even to remain a ghost.”

The Hogwarts ghosts all stared intently at Voldemort.

He seemed to be fading.

Chapter 3 -- Oblivion

Voldemort had heard the Barron. He looked down at his ghostly body.

Voldemort could tell that he was less substantial than he had been only a minute before. In fact, his feet had almost disappeared into a fine mist that seemed to be drifting back toward his dead body.

Voldemort was suddenly repelled by the sight of his corpse. He tried to move away from it, but found he could no longer move. He looked up in panic at the ghosts and cried aloud, “*What is happening?*” But his voice was barely louder than a whisper.

“We do not know,” said Nick in wonder. “We have never seen this before.”

The Hogwarts ghosts continued to stare in fascination at Voldemort.

Voldemort continued to fade. Most of his lower torso was now mist which was starting to envelope his dead body.

He now screamed, ‘*Help me!*’ but, this time, no sound came out of his mouth.

Voldemort tried with all his might to escape but now he could not even move his arms. What remained of his ghostly body was barely visibly. It was disintegrating into the white mist even faster.

After just a few seconds, all that remained of Lord Voldemort’s ghost was his snake-like face with a look of sheer terror in his eyes and his mouth agape in a silent scream.

Then he was gone.

The white mist now covered his dead body like an ethereal shroud. But it only remained so for a moment. Then it began to disappear as if it were being absorbed into the body.

In a few more moments, even the mist was gone.

The Hogwarts ghosts continued to stare, perhaps expecting something else to happen. But nothing did. Voldemort’s dead body remained cold and still.

At last, the Barron spoke, “Do you suppose he simply faded into oblivion?”

“A soul, no matter how damaged, does not disappear. I think he went *on*,” said the Fat Friar.

“There is no way of knowing,” said the Gray Lady. “However, I would like to think he got what he deserved.”

“Regardless,” said Nick, “We must report to Professor Dumbledore on what we have witnessed. I am most anxious to hear his opinion.”

The others voiced their agreement and they all drifted upward through the ceiling towards the new headmistress’s office in which Dumbledore’s portrait hung on the wall behind the desk.

The pain had returned. It was agony, beyond endurance. He burned. He thrashed and flailed against invisible surroundings. He felt he was moving but could not see movement. He saw nothing but blinding light that he could not shut out. Screaming filled his being. It was his own voice, but more -- other voices crying out in agony too, hundreds, no... thousands upon thousands of other voices.

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But this time, he did not have the strength to resist.

All that remained was an eternity of agony and despair.

The End