

A Destiny Fulfilled

by Pearle

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Dark, angst-filled one-shot. No romance, no happy ending, several character deaths. If you are looking for something light and fluffy, please look elsewhere.

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Chapter 1 of 1

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Disclaimer: The characters, settings, etc., of the Harry Potter series are not mine; they belong to J.K. Rowling and Co. I promise to return them when I am through. Well, most of them anyway.

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The end had come. Finally.

It had taken months, but Harry had found the remaining Horcruxes and, with his friends' help, destroyed them.

The time had come. He stood defiant, his anger at all that had come to pass, all he had lost, propelling him forward. He ticked off the list of the dead in his mind, those that had belonged to him, people he had lost to the Dark, their names his own personal hate-inducing mantra.

My mother.

My father.

Sirius.

Dumbledore.

His hate was sharpened to a razor point, aimed at the man facing him. "It ends, here, now, Voldemort."

"You think you can take me? Foolish, foolish boy. The great Dumbledore, sending a boy to do a man's job. No matter, your time is at hand, Harry." His red eyes glowed with an unholy light, lips peeled back in an evil grin.

My mother. My father. Sirius. Dumbledore.

"You can't win. It's time to pay for what you've done." He stood sure and tall, his friends at his side.

"Where's your precious Headmaster now, boy? There's no one here to save you. You don't have what it takes to kill me." Voldemort sneered as he pointed his wand in Harry's direction.

My mother my father Sirius Dumbledore...my mother my father Sirius Dumbledore... mymothermyfatherSiriusDumbledoremymothermyfatherSiriusDumbledore.

The names echoed through his mind at top speed. His mantra - homage to the dead.

"This is for my mother, you son of a bitch!" Harry screamed. Aiming his wand, drawing on the river of hate that flowed through him, he cast the killing curse. *Avada Kedavra!* A blinding jet of green light hit Riddle in the chest. Surprise registered in the glare of his red eyes as life faded from them.

"I didn't think you had it in you, Potter." Harry watched as the Death Eater standing near Voldemort's body slowly, deliberately removed his mask. Snape. He felt his anger flare anew.

"My Lord!"

Harry heard the anguished cry come from behind him.

"You'll pay for that, Potter." Bellatrix Lestrange raised her wand and took aim at him. *Avada Ke...*

Harry heard the curse coming from both sides of him, Snape's deep baritone a syllable ahead of Bellatrix. His only hope to dodge the curse was to duck out of the way. Harry dropped and rolled, vaguely aware of Bellatrix's dying scream.

"You killed Dumbledore! You betrayed the Order!" Hate poured from his body as he raised his wand to Snape.

"I suggest you stop and think, boy, or are you as hot-headed as your father?" Snape stood defensively, waiting to see what Harry would do.

"Your time is up, Snape." Harry raised his wand, his eyes hard. *Avada Ke...*

"Harry, no!" Hermione screamed. She was on the other side of the field, running toward him, still too far away for Harry to hear her even as the battle died around them. She had witnessed Snape's hex of Bellatrix in Harry's defence. She knew Harry planned to kill him, but Snape hadn't made a move toward Harry. Something wasn't right. There was more going on than met the eye.

MymothermyfatherSiriusDumbledoremymothermyfatherSiriusDumbledore.

"...*davra!* Again, a blinding jet of green light flew from the tip of his wand and struck his ex-Potions master squarely in the chest. The man flew backward ten feet before landing in a lifeless heap. Harry stood breathing hard, tears running down his face. It was over. It was finally over.

"Harry, no! He defended you. He killed Bellatrix before she could hex you." Hermione looked into his haunted eyes.

He didn't seem to hear her. "My mother...my father...Sirius...Dumbledore. MymothermyfatherSiriusDumbledore."

"Harry?"

"Take him to the hospital wing, Hermione. I suspect he's in shock." Arthur Weasley's quiet voice cut through her confusion. Somewhere off to the side she could hear Molly's plaintive wail for the loss of one of her brood. Harry's quiet murmur, repeated over and over again, scared her more.

In the end, the losses were great. There didn't seem to be a family that hadn't lost someone dear to them. Harry had gone strangely silent, a condition Hermione found far more alarming than his quiet mumbling. He was transferred to a private room at St Mungo's with the hope he could be treated and released.

Three days later, Professor McGonagall regained consciousness. Hermione had remained at Hogwarts, helping treat the wounded. While the Headmistress was relieved to know Harry was alive after defeating Voldemort, she had been saddened to learn of his mental state. A list of the dead had further upset the witch. She mourned for each name on it.

Hermione found it odd that her Head of House seemed to caress the parchment with her finger as she came to Snape's name. "Excuse me, Professor, but Snape was a traitor. He killed the Headmaster. He betrayed the Order."

The old witch lay back against her pillows, dark shadows under eyes showing the strain she had been under. "No, child, you don't understand. Albus bound him to an oath. He never betrayed the Order, or more importantly, he never betrayed Albus. I'm just sorry Severus didn't live through the battle."

"Harry saw him kill the Headmaster!"

"Have you not learned by now that what you see is not always as things are? Albus was convinced Harry would not be able to summon enough force to make the curse work. He was dying from the poison he consumed when they located one of the Horcrux. He bound Severus to a wizard's oath, hoping Harry would finally be able to fulfil his destiny when the time came." Minerva sobbed quietly, tears streaming down her face. She waved Hermione away. "Please go, leave me be."

Hermione walked out in a daze. She remembered a comment from the fake 'Mad Eye' Moody during fourth-year. *Avada Kedavra's a curse that needs a powerful bit of magic behind it -- you could all get your wands out now and point them at me and say the words, and I doubt I'd get so much as a nosebleed."*

Aimlessly, she wandered the empty corridors, stopping short when she noticed the gargoyle statue guarding the Headmaster's office had moved to the side. Cautiously, she drew her wand from a side pocket and proceeded silently up the moving stairway. The door at the top was open, beckoning her to enter. Hermione knew she should turn back, go look for someone in authority, or at the very least an Auror who could investigate. Instead, she moved quietly forward.

The Headmaster's office appeared to be empty, but as Professor McGonagall had said, "appearances could be deceiving." Carefully, she scanned the office. She had only been there a handful of times during her time as a student. An odd door set in the far wall caught her eye.

The door appeared...different from the rest of the room. Several rows of runes were etched into the wood. Hermione could feel the hum of magic as she got closer. She could make out just a few of the symbols.

"Truth...upon...death...Phoenix."

Still feeling strangely numb, Hermione pushed the door open. The room was empty save for a lone wood table standing in the middle of it. A Pensieve, etched with some of the same symbols she had recognised on the door, sat on the table.

She knew she should report this to someone. She should go get Professor McGonagall. She needed to leave this place. The pull of the unknown was too great. Against all logic, Hermione walked forward and entered the Pensieve.

She was back in the Headmaster's office. Dumbledore and Snape were arguing.

"There has to be another way." Snape rose and started to pace, his face set in its usual scowl.

"There is no other way, Severus. Harry is the only one that can fulfil the prophecy. While he may think he hates Tom enough to kill him, you and I both know he does not feel enough anger, have enough force, to cast the curse effectively." Dumbledore reached for his tea, his injured arm lying uselessly in his lap. "And all things being equal, I would rather the poison didn't kill me. We may as well make my death count for something."

"I told you not to try and disarm the cup!" Snape yelled, his face red with rage. Just as suddenly as his anger had surfaced, it fled. He sat heavily in the chair he had vacated just a moment before. "The antidote will be ready next week. There is no way to speed up the process. It must brew for nineteen full days."

"This is Dark Magic, Severus. The antidote will be useless. But if it makes you feel better, by all means, continue to brew it." Albus smiled benevolently at the dark man. "We must all play our parts if Tom is to be defeated once and for all."

"I can't do it. Please, Albus, don't ask me."

"You're the only one I trust to do this for me."

Severus sneered at his friend and mentor. "What you really mean is I'm the only one evil enough to cast the curse properly. Or perhaps, since there's very little chance I will live long enough to be prosecuted for the crime, I'm the only one you can ask to cast an Unforgivable and not worry about being the cause of someone's incarceration for life in Azkaban."

"Severus..."

"There has to be another way."

"There isn't. Draco is set to move in the next twenty-four hours. I will make sure Harry is with me at the appropriate time."

"And you think your precious Potter will just sit back and let me kill you?"

"Don't worry, I'll make sure Harry doesn't interfere. Albus reached for his wand before turning back to the man. "I want you make the Unbreakable Vow with me."

"Albus!"

"Severus, you are already bound by the vow you took with Narcissa, this will make sure you are positioned to provide us with the best information possible. I will leave unshakeable evidence with my Secret Keeper that you are not responsible for my death."

"It won't matter if I live, no one will believe I didn't want to kill you."

With dawning horror, Hermione drew closer as Professor McGonagall's words finally made sense to the shocked witch. The Headmaster was binding Snape to an oath - an oath to kill him in front of Harry. Dumbledore wanted Harry to witness his death. It was the reason Harry had been frozen to the wall, not able to help the Headmaster. Dumbledore's death would finally push Harry to the edge of sanity. His death, added to the others, would finally be enough reason, provide enough hate, to kill Voldemort.

Hermione pulled out of the Pensieve. She needed to see Professor McGonagall. She needed reassurance that she was not just some pawn in Dumbledore's game. That he hadn't used Harry for his own end. That Dumbledore couldn't be as manipulative as he seemed. There had to be a greater good in all that had happened.

The young witch backed slowly out of the secret room, afraid the evil contained in the Pensieve would somehow come to life and attack her. She didn't have far to go to find the current Headmistress.

"You've looked, haven't you?" The Headmistress sat in front of the fire, a shawl draped over her fragile shoulders, a sturdy cane resting in her grip. "Well, what will you do with your new-found knowledge?"

Hermione's voice was a whisper. "You knew. You knew Snape was acting on Dumbledore's orders. You knew they were using Harry." She finished in an accusatory tone. "And you let them."

Minerva sighed. "Sit, Miss Granger. We need to talk."

Warily, Hermione sat on the edge of her chair. "Why?"

"Why? Do you really believe we could let You-Know-Who get away again? He would have destroyed our world." Minerva's voice softened. "Miss Granger... Hermione... I wish there had been another way. Mr. Potter's condition upsets me deeply, but I did not make the prophecy. This was his...destiny."

"You used us."

"I suppose you could look at it that way."

"How would you look at it?"

"I believe the wizarding world owes you a debt. Owes Mr. Potter its very existence. There was no other way to end the evil that was You-Know-Who." Minerva watched the young woman struggle with her anger.

"If you will excuse me, Headmistress..."

Minerva reached out to the witch. "Hermione, please understand..."

"Headmistress." She fled the room before she could fall under the old woman's spell.

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"MymothermyfatherSiriusDumbledore." Harry's quiet mumble seemed to fill the room as he sat in his bed, rocking slowly back and forth.

It had been a week since the final battle. Harry had started mumbling again. She came daily to visit him, not even sure if he was aware of her presence. Her eyes welled with unshed tears. The wizarding world had spent the last seven days celebrating his victory, but the cost had been dear. Worse than anyone knew.

One young man, destined to greatness who had sacrificed his life, his sanity, so that the world could sleep a little easier at night.

So many gone, so many dead, but at what cost?

"MymothermyfatherSiriusDumbledore." Harry's quiet mumble filled the room.

Hermione allowed the words to wash over her as she silently cried for the boy who lived.

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Pearle 11-15-05

A/N: I am very afraid this may be close to the way book seven ends. I really don't believe either Harry or Severus will live (I have my doubts about Ron, too). I believe Hermione will be the only one to survive. JKR has said the final chapter will be an epilogue and wrap up what happens to the "surviving" characters. I think the last chapter will take place ten years after the final battle; Hermione will visit the graves of the dead, "telling" Harry and Ron how the world has evolved.

// Harry survives, I think he will walk the edge between sanity and madness. I just pushed a little further this time.

A grateful thank you to my beta, Nakhash, for her corrections, suggestions, and never ending supply of commas. She is truly the best of the best. Another set of eyes is always helpful, the mistakes, however, are still mine.

Please review and let me know what you think. I love hearing from you! As always, thoughts, comments, reviews, whatever are most welcome.

Pearle