

After the War

by Maydaymja

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Chapter 1 of 1

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"There is no glory in war," a man once said, "only lies, suffering, and pain. There is no glory in victory, only the blood of men on your hands. War is a level of hell so deep, none can fully understand it."

The sun rises anew each morning. Its warmth spreads through my window and into my chambers, filling them with a glow akin only to heaven. What a contrast to the traitorous thoughts in my mind.

Was it really worth all this? Was the defeat of evil worth the cost of human lives spent in the defense of their homes, their families, their way of life?

Can we ever go back to the way things were before: before this war, before the last? All I have ever known is war. My life has been bound to it, and now, now that it is over, there is no victory. I have the blood of men on my hands. I can never clean it off.

"Go home," they told me. "Your work here is done." Yet, had I not done too much already? I cannot go back to the way things were before. Life never moves in that direction, only painstakingly forward. Ever forward.

The life I knew is now a mere shadow of the past. My friends, comrades, compatriots, mentors, my lover, are all gone. It seems as if I am the only one left. There is no pleasure in this victory. All that remains now is the shallow well-wishing of those who believe me to be some sort of a hero.

I am not a hero. War does not make heroes, only demons. And that is what I have become: a demon. Walled up inside my mind, lies run through my head:

'This is the only way.'

'It is your destiny.'

'You can go back to the way things used to be.'

'It is what is expected of you.'

'You are our only hope.'

Damn it, these thoughts won't leave me alone. Why was it I? Why was I chosen to deliver the fatal blow? Why did so many others have to die in the name of my protection? I am only a mere mortal, not some god. I would have died anyway. Why, then, did they die for me?

I smash the smiling portrait of my parents to the ground. There is no room for happiness in these chambers. My comrades. My roommate. My best friend. Dead. All of them.

I wish I were too.

I look to the bottle in my hand. Ogden's. It won't do enough to wash away my pain. I need a more permanent solution.

In my other hand is a wand. I find it ironic that this weapon was the same to bring me so much trouble in the first place.

I set the bottle down.

"Avada Kedavra!