

Destructo Totalum

by Alexannah

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Chapter 1 of 1

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It had happened.

Albus Dumbledore saw the sparks first. A shower of gleaming red and gold sparks, shot into the air by a wand far away, hovering over a scene unseen. The sparks exploded into life faster and further than any cast in his memory, and he knew as soon as he saw them it could mean only one thing.

He left the crowd, the pile of bodies, the weeping relatives and friends, and ran as fast as he could towards the signal.

It seemed to take an age; the sparks seemed to almost get further away, the further he ran; but he knew it was only in his head. Everyone had been waiting for so long, he could not quite believe that the moment had finally arrived. Even with all the losses, he knew that the sparks meant the end. It was over. No more.

At last, Dumbledore arrived, skidding to a halt, in a clearing. Two figures met his eyes. One, black robed, crumpled on the ground. The other, clad in ripped and bloody jeans and shirt, kneeling only a foot away.

"HARRY!"

Dumbledore hurried over, dropping to his own knees beside the boy. "Harry." The eighteen year old was shaking madly; the look on his face was somewhere between a twisted smile and a sick grimace. Albus grasped him by the shoulder and without hesitating pulled him into an embrace, trying to calm him.

"Harry. Shh. It's all right; it's over; you've done it. It's all right, Harry."

~*~@*~

Albus almost dreaded the Healers' assurance that Harry could go home. Far from wanting the boy to be injured, he worried about the far more serious emotional blows. Even the trauma of killing a Dark wizard had to pale in comparison with the loss of friends so close to him as Ron and Hermione had been. Returning to the Burrow, which was silent in its grief, would be pure torture. But there was nowhere else left.

When the news had been broken to Harry, he had barely reacted. After almost a minute of sitting impassively, he had asked how it had happened. Albus had tried to describe Bellatrix's bloody rampage with as little detail as possible, but the words seemed to only wash over Harry.

As Albus entered the ward again, he found that not much had changed. Harry was still staring into space, although now he looked more thoughtful than blank. This had to be an improvement.

"Harry?" Albus said as gently as he could.

There was a moment of silence, then, "Yes?"

"The Healers have said you can leave when you're ready."

Harry looked down. "To the Burrow?"

"Yes."

Harry nodded, surprising Albus. "I'm ready."

He flinched when Albus took his arm to Apparate them both, but Albus wasn't surprised. Harry had never been used to physical touch. It pained his heart to think what the boy must be going through.

Back at the Burrow, the atmosphere was unbearable. Although the place was crowded with the surviving Order members, of which there were still a fair few, the place was almost silent. Everybody watched, expectantly, as Albus arrived with Harry.

To avoid their stares, perhaps, Harry looked down at his hands, which Albus now noticed were fingering a wand. He frowned as he recognised it.

"Harry, what happened to your wand?"

"It broke when we were fighting off the Inferi," Harry replied quietly. "You remember."

"I mean, the one you were using afterwards."

"It shattered. The last spell I performed."

Albus couldn't take his eyes off the wand Harry was holding. "That's Voldemort's wand, Harry."

"Not going to need it any more, is he?" Harry said. "Besides, it's closer to my own than any other because of the cores, isn't it."

Albus opened his mouth, but found he could not think of an objection. Still, something didn't feel right.

He shot a glare at the room at large, and the occupants turned away, resuming whatever they had been doing before the new arrivals showed up. Harry didn't seem to have noticed.

Albus pulled out a chair and sat down at the Weasley's kitchen table. "Harry?"

"Yes, Professor?" Harry replied, still not looking up from the new wand.

"What was the last Horcrux?"

The room stilled as Albus said it, but it didn't matter. Voldemort was gone, there was no need for any more secrecy. Harry did look up this time, meeting Albus' eyes in a look of surprise. "Pardon?"

"The locket, the cup, the snake, the ring, the diary; they were all gone when we parted. What was the last one?"

Harry dropped his eyes again. "Another book," he said after a pause. "I don't know what he intended to do with this one." Before Albus could ask further questions, Harry said, "Can I go? I want to be on my own for a while."

Albus nodded. Mrs Weasley, who had been standing by the sink, rubbing the same plate with the dishcloth for the last few minutes, turned around.

"Harry, your camp bed's set up in R..." she stopped, seeming unable to complete her sentence. "Your usual room. I can move you into the twins' room if you'd prefer..."

"I'm all right, thank you, Mrs Weasley."

~*~@*~

As Harry reached the landing, Ginny spotted him. She only had to spot the mess of raven hair and the glasses before launching herself into his arms. Harry, obviously slightly taken aback, staggered backwards a couple of steps, but quickly overcame his surprise and wound his arms around her, hugging her tight.

"I thought I'd lost you," Ginny whispered, tears pricking the corners of her eyes. She'd lost her brother and her best friend; but somehow, miraculously, Harry had not gone the same way as the rest of the Trio; he was there, in her arms.

"You didn't," Harry said, slightly muffled.

"I thought when Mum told me about R-Ron and Hermione that you'd b-be dead too because you were always tog-gether..."

"We got separated," Harry said simply.

Ginny pulled back slightly, but only to kiss him full on the mouth. This time, Harry seemed to be ready for her and kissed her back properly.

"I love you," she whispered after they drew apart, wiping her eyes on her sleeve.

Harry did not reply, but pulled her close again, and Ginny lay her head on his chest, listening to the comforting sound of his living, beating heart.

~*~@*~

It was a few minutes after Harry had disappeared upstairs before Albus spoke his thoughts out loud.

"Harry seems ..." Unusually ineloquent, Albus struggled for words. "He's not quite how I expected him to be."

"We all respond to death, and grieve, differently, Albus," was Arthur's soft reply. "You can't predict it."

Albus knew Arthur was right, but he could not help a shiver run up his spine. He shook it off.

~*~@*~

The rippling face of Harry Potter stared back at him from the lake surface. He began walking again, quicker now, towards the place where it had happened that last, triumphant battle. The last victory.

He came across the clearing at last and stopped before raising Voldemort's wand into the sky.

"MOSMORDRE!"

The Dark Mark formed in the sky; the skull comprised of stars with the great serpent tongue.

It took a while for them to appear; black-robed Death Eaters Apparated, one by one, into the clearing, standing still in shock at the sight of him. A smile curved upon Harry's lips, and recognising the expression, every Death Eater in the circle fell to their knees before him.

~*~@*~

Potter would *not* get the last Horcrux. Of that, Voldemort had been determined.

For the first time ever, and by complete accident, Voldemort had broken into Potter's mind and seen for himself the destruction of one of his Horcruxes. After checking the others, and finding them all destroyed or replaced save for one, Voldemort had laid a false trail and had stood, waiting, for Potter to appear.

It had gone far enough. Voldemort had been seething in anger at Potter, at Dumbledore, and at himself, for not having protected the parts of his soul well enough. When Potter had stumbled across him in the Forbidden Forest, the scene had not been pretty.

With his Death Eaters causing a distraction by attacking the castle, Voldemort himself had faced Potter, alone. This time, the wands had not connected; Voldemort knew the boy was using another's, as he had witnessed his own wand's twin break in his brief venture into Potter's mind. The borrowed wand did not work well for him; within seconds Potter was disarmed and at Voldemort's mercy. Voldemort pointed his wand straight at Potter's heart, prepared to perform the Killing Curse.

Before he could speak the words, the boy yelled, "*Accio wand!*"

The final, desperate attempt at what was probably the boy's first ever attempt at wandless magic worked; the borrowed wand flew back into his hands. Before Voldemort could react, Potter took aim and yelled, "*Destructo totalum!*"

A last resort if Voldemort had ever known one; so many times, the wizards who had cast that spell had been killed in its backlash. Either Potter did not know at this point, or was too desperate to care.

The resulting explosion from the borrowed wand, while probably being far weaker than if it had been cast by the wand's rightful owner, sent Voldemort spinning into a surge of pain and darkness. As his senses returned, he realised he was collapsed on the ground, his body torn; there was blood everywhere.

I still have one last Horcrux he told himself through the blinding agony. *This is not the end!*

The boy had survived, too; he was curled up in a protective ball ten feet away, the borrowed wand lying around him in tiny splinters. He was, again, defenceless.

Voldemort snarled. All desire for a quick *Avada Kedavra* had gone, leaving him with a thirst for suffering. The boy had almost killed him twice! He deserved a fate worse than death.

He called for his Dementors.

They approached swiftly at his command, and Voldemort took savage pleasure in seeing the panic in Potter's face as he scrambled to his feet, attempting to escape. Voldemort drank in the desperate scurrying for the broken wand, the screams as the Dementors held him aloft, and the final end for Harry Potter.

Their job done, the Dementors retreated, and Voldemort looked over at what was left of the Boy-Who-Lived. Potter was now no more than a shell; a soulless body, a useless, painful reminder for his friends of what they had lost.

Or ...

Voldemort smiled. An idea was coming to him. There were two bodies lying there ... one dying, and one soulless.

He reached out for his wand, which had miraculously survived and put it to his own head. Knowing full well the consequences of the spell on the tip of his tongue, he drew a deep, rattling breath and gasped out, "*Avada Kedavra!*"

The searing agony, though familiar from the first time, was by no means any less torturous but it didn't last. The piece of Voldemort's soul, so fragmented from so many Horcruxes, now ripped from its body, honed in on the next available.

And it was with a jerk and a gasp of breath that Harry Potter's body surged with life again and moved rapidly to its feet.

Voldemort's wand was plucked from his body's dead hand and pointed into the sky. Out of the wand came a shower of red and gold sparks the signal, Voldemort knew, for his own defeat.

And he dropped to Potter's knees, shaking with laughter.

The End