

The Last Horcrux

by Alison

The final battle - but is it over?

Complete short story

Chapter 1 of 1

The final battle - but is it over?

The characters and the situations within this fanfiction story are not my property. They are the property of J.K. Rowling, Warner Brothers, and others, and are used without permission; challenge to copyright is not intended and should not be construed. No profit is being made from the use of these characters and situations; these written-down imaginings are only presented in an internet forum for the interest of and consumption by like-minded individuals who enjoy them and recognize them as unauthorized fanfiction only, and are not in any way meant to be confused with the originals nor presented as authorized materials of these owners.

The Last Horcrux

By Alison Venugoban

Harry Potter stood and stared at the corpse of Voldemort and wondered what he should be feeling.

Whenever he'd thought about it, whenever he'd seriously considered the prospect that he might come out of the battle not just alive but victorious, he'd imagined a different scenario – scenes of jubilation, usually, the survivors whooping and congratulating each other, fireworks and parties. Now that seemed juvenile. This was not like winning the Quidditch Cup. This had been bloody and exhausting and horrifying, a scene where the winners had lost as much as the losers.

Even the sense of horror was missing. Now all Harry could feel was a curious numbness. Voldemort was lying dead at his feet, his red eyes staring blankly at the sky, his followers either dead or running for their lives from Ministry Aurors, but Harry could feel nothing.

Perhaps that was because so many other bodies paved the way to this corpse. Ginny was gone, and so was Ron. In fact, apart from Percy, the whole of the Weasley clan had been wiped from the face of the earth.

It had been the pain of those losses that had in part kept Harry going, kept him chasing the Dark Lord through the past few interminable months. His grief had made him strong. But now – Voldemort was dead.

And still Harry had failed. For he and Ron and Hermione had never destroyed the last Horcrux. He still had no idea what it was. Everything else: the silver locket, Nagini the snake, the goblet, all had been destroyed. But not the final one, whatever it was disguised as. And as long as that survived, it did not matter that Voldemort's shell lay at Harry's feet. For his spirit still survived, somewhere, sheltered within the last Horcrux.

"Potter, come away. It's over."

Harry gripped his wand tighter and gritted his teeth. That voice, that hateful voice behind him, still had the power to make him feel something. What overwhelming injustice, that Ron and Ginny should have died, while Snape survived! Why was it that Dumbledore's trust had been proved right all along? The man had been on their side after all, working on destabilization of the Death Eaters from within.

Harry glanced over his shoulder. Snape sat with his back against a tree, a grimace of pain on his pallid face. His right leg was stretched awkwardly out in front of him, broken when he had caused the diversion that had allowed Harry the opportunity to kill Voldemort.

Another survivor knelt by his side. Harry noted with mild surprise that Hermione was gripping Snape's hand in hers. Harry had discerned a softening in her attitude towards the man over the last few months, as he'd secretly passed on information to the Order about Death Eater plans. Harry and Hermione had met with him on these occasions, and she'd seemed grateful for his taciturn but apparently sincere regret concerning Ron's murder. But the tableau the pair presented now left Harry suspecting more than gratitude on Hermione's part. There was something about the way his friend was looking at their former teacher that made his heart twist. How could she be so disloyal to Ron as to have feelings for Snape?

Harry couldn't forgive and forget so easily. Now Voldemort was dead, who was there left to hate? Anger and the need for revenge had been what fuelled him, but now grief was hovering just beyond his numbness, threatening to engulf him in a tidal wave of emotion that would ultimately drown him. It would have been a relief to be able to hate Snape as a traitor, but even that had been taken from Harry. He turned his attention back to the corpse on the ground.

A sparkle caught his eye, a reflection from something in the trodden and blood-stained grass.

He looked closer and saw Voldemort's wand lying a little way from the body. The sunlight shimmered along its polished length, reflecting scintillating points of colour back at him. As he gazed at it, a strange urge overtook him. All he had to do was pick it up, hold the wand and everything would be alright again, he knew it. His numbness would be gone, but the grief wouldn't overwhelm him. He was strong; he had defeated the greatest wizard the world had ever known!

Wasn't it only right and fitting that Voldemort's weapon should become Harry's as a spoil of war? He was aware of his own wand still gripped in his right hand, but his left itched to reach out and take the one lying on the grass so seductively.

Yes, he thought, pick up the wand ... and then I can take on all those who belittled me and caused me pain over the years ... the Dursleys, I can kill them ... the stupid people at the Ministry who believed I was a liar ... Snape, for surviving when so many of my friends have died ... The killing would never have to stop; I can remain strong and invincible so long as the hatred fuels me ...

He reached down his left hand, all his concentration on the beautiful wand before him. Vaguely he was aware of Snape, suddenly yelling something, but he ignored him.

A blast of vile green light hit just inches from his hand, smashing the wand into splinters. Harry whirled and saw Snape with his wand out, ready to cast again. Of course, betrayal at last!

"SECTUMSEMPRA!" Harry bellowed, his wand slashing down in a great arc as he rolled out of the way of the next curse.

Blood spurted from Snape's torso and he fell backwards, his wand flying from his hand. Hermione screamed and leant protectively over him, staring at Harry in disbelief.

"Get out of the way, Hermione! He tried to kill me!"

"Harry, no!" She was sobbing, the tears running down her face as she shook her head in violent denial. "The wand, look at Voldemort's wand!"

Almost against his will, Harry swiveled his head.

The wand appeared to be sizzling, the individual splinters jumping like hot oil in a fry pan. As he watched, a dark shadow seeped from the splinters, hovering over the wreckage like a Dementor over a victim. It opened its mouth in a silent scream of anguish, its ghostly arms raised to the sky, and then its form became unsteady and blurred. A wisp of breeze blew away the last few rags of Voldemort's spirit.

The numbness surrounding him evaporated with the abruptness of a popped soap bubble. Harry struggled to his feet in horror and began to run to the tree. Hermione was supporting Snape, desperately tracing her wand over the deep wounds Harry's curse had made, and muttering incantations to try to stem the blood loss, but there was so much damage, so much! Still it pumped from the severed arteries, pooling onto the ground beneath them.

As Harry reached them, his eyes met those of his former teacher. A bubble of blood formed at Snape's mouth; his breathing was labored. His whole body shook like a leaf in a hurricane.

"The wand ... Horcrux," he whispered to Harry. And died.

The End.

Author's note: If you liked this story, please have a read of my original story "Love Inhuman" at this link:

<http://www.thepetulantpoetess.com/viewstory.php?sid=11932>

Alison