

## **Fate**

The wind swirled around the concrete play area. Leaves danced and twisted as they dropped from the trees in the late autumn twilight.

He stood and watched them move, his robes open and swirling behind him as he ignored the bitter chill the wind carried.

The only sound was the creaking of the see-saw as it rocked up and down gently.

Before him were men in black. Behind him, every one else.

But no one moved.

No one even dared to breath.

The power of a single word shown above anything else.

"No."

There didn't seem to be anybody brave enough to ask the question, the one that was on all of their lips.

He walked forward and brushed his fingers against the cold metal of the roundabout. It moved slightly, rotating slowly. He almost smiled. How often had he longed to play when he was younger.

"Harry!?"

"No," he repeated softly.

"Then die," Voldemort said, only his voice betrayed his confusion.

He walked back over to them, standing in the middle of the two groups.

He turned to Voldemort and spread his arms.

"Kill me."

Voldemort raised his wand but then lowered it. "Wormtail," he barked.

"Advada Kedavra," the twisted rat-like man said, pointing his wand at Harry.

Harry smiled and closed his eyes.

He opened them again and felt the fear. Felt the surprise. Felt the envy.

He laughed, a little, under his breath. The laughter forming small clouds of moisture in the cold air. "Always the puppet, never the master."

"What are you talking about?" Voldemort demanded.

"Fate."

"What!?"

Harry shook his head softly. "You have no idea who you have messed with, Voldemort," he said sadly. "And what you have done to me, for me."

"What are you talking about."

Harry raised his wand and pointed it at Voldemort. "End it."

A bright light poured out of the wand. It went straight through Voldemort's shields and attempts to dodge it.

The Death Eaters attacked Harry, but nothing seemed to touch him. Nothing seemed to affect him. Nothing seemed to work.

"Take it!" Harry yelled as the spell continued. "Take it all."

He dropped to his knees. He felt empty. It was over. He was empty. He smiled slightly.

"What happened?" Lucius Malfoy demanded.

"It was fate, Malfoy," Harry sighed. "I used to believe that there was no fate, that the future wasn't set. I was wrong. I thought Dumbledore manipulated me, but he was just a puppet, like I was. Fate likes a balance. Voldemort disrupted that."

"What do you mean?" Hermione asked.

"I was created to restore the balance. You have evil like Malfoy, incompetence like his son, good like McGonagall, and idiocracy like Scrimgeour. Balance."

"What about you?" she demanded.

He smiled at her gently. "Look at me, Hermione. You tell me."

She did and he saw the horror in her eyes. "Your magic..."

"Balance," he said with a shrug. "I am at least alive."

"But..."

"I've known," he said simply. "I've always known that to win I would have to give up everything. I've done it. The rest is in your hands."

"I'll come with you," she said.

He laughed. "You can't, none of you can. You can't give up your magic, it means too much to you. To come with me you would never be able to fly, never be able to read a magical book, never be able to Portkey or Apparate, never be able to floo or create a healing potion."

She looked away and he nodded. He nodded once more at Ron and then turned.

"Wait!" McGonagall shouted. "What are you going to do?"

He paused and looked over his shoulder. "Live."

And so he left them, the Death Eaters and the Order, on a playground in Surrey, for the last time.

As he walked he started to smile. He opened the door of his car and looked at the First Class Around the World cruise tickets on the passenger seat. He'd done the only thing he could.

Fate had played its game and he hadn't liked it, so he had changed the game. Fate didn't care about him anymore. He might be alone, he might be powerless, but he was free. Free from them all.

He put the car in first and drove off, leaving it, and them, all behind for the last time. Fate had washed its hand of him, and now it was true for him.

"There's no fate but that which we make for ourselves."