

Title: Most Desperate Desire

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Summary: Dumbledore cannot resist the temptation to fulfill his deepest and most desperate desire.

Timeframe: Dumbledore's personal lessons with Harry in Book 6

Audience: PG

Category: The Untold Story

Warnings: none

Length: 8 pages

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Chapter 1 -- Snitch and Stone

Dumbledore and Harry had just finished discussing their excursion into Dumbledore's memory of meeting young Tom Riddle in the orphanage.

Harry got to his feet. As he walked across the room, his eyes fell upon the little table on which Marvolo Gaunt's ring had rested the last time, but the ring was no longer there.

'Yes, Harry?' said Dumbledore, for Harry had come to a halt.

'The ring's gone,' said Harry, looking around. 'But I thought you might have the mouth-organ or something.'

Dumbledore beamed at him, peering over the top of his half-moon spectacles.

'Very astute, Harry, but the mouth-organ was only ever a mouth-organ.' And on that enigmatic note he waved to Harry, who understood himself to be dismissed.

As soon as Harry had closed the door, Dumbledore opened the top drawer of his desk and took out a carved wooden writing box. He set the box onto his desk and

opened it. Inside were his Deluminator, his treasured copy of *Tales of Beedle the Bard* written in ancient runes, a Golden Snitch and a parchment scroll with a red wax seal which he had recently completed.

Dumbledore withdrew the Snitch and laid it before him in front of the box. He then withdrew from inside his robes the ring which Harry had just noticed missing from the little table. He stared at the cracked black stone in the setting and then his blackened right hand. Finally, he placed the ring on his desk. Then he took his wand and pointed it at the ring. The cracked black stone popped out of the setting and skidded to a stop next to the Snitch.

Dumbledore paused. He contemplated the stone for several seconds, but then shook his head. He pointed his wand at the now stoneless ring and it vanished. Then he pointed his wand at the Snitch and made a writing-like motion with his hand.

Thin, slanting writing appeared, lightly engraved on the surface of the Snitch.

'I open at the close.'

Dumbledore muttered an incantation and the engraved writing disappeared. He then made a small cutting motion with the tip of his wand and the Snitch opened into two halves like a locket.

Now Dumbledore paused again. He stared intently at the stone lying next to the open Snitch. Finally, after nearly a minute, he put his wand down. But then he paused again. His mind was in desperate conflict; the internal turmoil was unbearable.

Here was his last chance to have what he desired above all else. Yes, he had initially succumbed in Marvolo Gaunt's shack; but he had been thwarted -- his blackened hand a constant reminder. Until now, that had been enough to suppress his compulsion; but only just -- because the opportunity had remained within reach. Now, the window would close. His desire would henceforth forever be out of reach.

Very slowly, Dumbledore moved his hand toward the stone. His hand trembled with anxiety. He paused with his fingers an inch away from it. After several seconds, Dumbledore lurched forward and grabbed the stone. He immediately

fell back heavily into his chair and moaned, clutching the stone to his chest within his blackened fist.

After a few moments, Dumbledore took a deep breath and sighed. He looked down and slowly opened his hand. The stone lay in his palm. Now, seemingly more in control, he took his other hand and slowly and deliberately turned over the stone in his palm three times.

But as soon as he completed the third turn, he screamed, "NO!" and closed his eyes as tightly as he could. Then he began to sob and closed both fists tightly around the stone. His shoulders heaved with emotion and he slowly leaned forward until his forehead rested on his desk.

It was some time before he regained his composure. He sat upright with his eyes still closed and clutching the stone with both hands. With trepidation he opened his eyes, which were still damp with tears.

Very slowly he turned his head and looked around the room. He was *alone*.

He let out a great breath and sighed with relief.

With renewed resolve, Dumbledore took the stone and placed it into the open Snitch. He picked up his wand and used it to reseal the Snitch. He muttered several more incantations and then placed the Snitch back into the writing box. He applied a wax seal to the box, muttered yet another incantation, and placed it back into the drawer.

Dumbledore slowly got up from his desk and began to pace around his office. It would be several hours before he finally went to bed.

Chapter 2 -- Potion and Phantoms

Dumbledore and Harry stood before the potion filled pedestal on the small island in the dark cave by the sea.

Before Harry could make any further protest, Dumbledore lowered the crystal goblet into the potion. For a split second, Harry hoped that he would not be able to touch the potion with the goblet, but the crystal sank

into the surface as nothing else had; when the glass was full to the brim, Dumbledore lifted it to his mouth.

'Your good health, Harry.'

And he drained the goblet. Harry watched, terrified, his hands gripping the rim of the basin so hard that his fingertips were numb.

'Professor?' he said anxiously, as Dumbledore lowered the empty glass. 'How do you feel?'

Dumbledore shook his head, his eyes closed. Harry wondered whether he was in pain. Dumbledore plunged the glass blindly back into the basin, refilled it, and drank once more.

In silence, Dumbledore drank three gobletsful of the potion. Then, halfway through the fourth goblet, he staggered and fell forward against the basin. His eyes were still closed, his breathing heavy.

'Professor Dumbledore?' said Harry, his voice strained. 'Can you hear me?'

Dumbledore did not answer. His face was twitching as though he was deeply asleep, but dreaming a horrible dream. His grip on the goblet was slackening; the potion was about to spill from it. Harry reached forward and grasped the crystal cup, holding it steady.

Dumbledore was losing the battle. The potion was overcoming all his considerable defenses. He struggled to maintain control, but it was no use. He was falling...

His sister was being attacked by three Muggle boys... She was in pain... His father was in a rage over what they had done... Why had not Albus prevented it? They were all pointing their fingers at him.

His father was being sent to Azkaban for attacking the Muggles... His mother was inconsolable... Why had not Albus prevented it? They were all pointing their fingers at him.

He was at his mother's funeral... She was dead because Ariana had lost control... His brother was inconsolable... Why had not Albus prevented it? They were all pointing their fingers at him.

He was at home... Ariana was screaming in pain... Aberforth was dueling desperately with Grindelwald, who was dancing and laughing while spells, hexes and curses were flying everywhere and ricocheting off the walls... Albus was crouching naked and helpless in a corner pleading for them to stop... Ariana was begging for Albus to save her, but he could not move... Suddenly he had a wand and fired a shield charm to protect Ariana and Aberforth. Instead, it ricocheted off a sign hanging from the ceiling which said, *'For the Greater Good'* and turned bright green. The green spell moved across the room in slow motion towards Ariana, who pleaded for Albus to stop it... Grindelwald laughed hysterically as the green spell enveloped Ariana and set her ablaze... She screamed and writhed in agony... Aberforth begged Albus to save Ariana while Grindelwald continued to dance and laugh and fire spells in every direction... He screamed but was again wandless and totally helpless... He was forced to watch over and over again...

"Albus..."

He knew that voice. It was his mother's voice.

"Turn away," said another voice. It was his father's.

"You cannot save me," said a third, much gentler voice -- his sister Ariana's.

"I must," croaked Dumbledore desperately.

"You must turn away," all three voices said together, "Turn away."

With every muscle in his body screaming in protest, he slowly turned away from the horrific scene. When it had at last past from his vision, he suddenly felt as if a great weight had been lifted from his shoulders.

He was incredibly thirsty.

His senses were numb. He was out of breath as if he had just climbed the tallest mountain.

All he could see were three blurred shapes in the darkness, but he recognized them -- his father, his mother and his sister. His heart leapt. He knew he must keep looking at them and not turn around or he would be back in the nightmare.

His senses began to clear, and his family came into focus.

"You are safe now," said his father. "Catch your breath."

"You saved me?" asked Dumbledore.

"We only helped a bit," said his Mother, "but it was enough,"

"You asked us to help you," said Ariana sweetly. "You called us."

"The stone?" said Dumbledore, sounding unsure.

"Yes, the Resurrection Stone," said Ariana. "...in your office."

"But you did not appear..." said Dumbledore questioningly.

"You choose not to see us," said his father.

"But we have been with you the whole time," said his Mother kindly.

"I'm so sorry," sobbed Dumbledore, his eyes filling with tears.

"We understand," said his mother soothingly. "We shall see you again very soon and then have all the time in the world to talk. But there is no time now."

"Now you must get up and save Harry Potter," said Ariana. She smiled her beautiful smile and then she and her mother and father disappeared.

Dumbledore shook his head and blinked. He was lying on his side on the rocky island in the middle of the lake. He looked around and saw Harry being carried in the clutches of more than a dozen Inferi toward the dark waters of the lake.

Dumbledore climbed to his feet grasping the basin to help hoist himself up. As anger welled up inside him, he took his wand from his robes and began to swing it over his head.

...through the darkness, fire erupted: crimson and gold, a ring of fire that surrounded the rock so that the Inferi holding Harry so tightly stumbled and faltered; they did not dare pass through the flames to get to the water. They dropped Harry; he hit the ground, slipped on the rock, and fell, grazing his arms, but scrambled back up.

Dumbledore was on his feet again, pale as any of the surrounding Inferi, but taller than any too, the fire dancing in his eyes; his wand was raised like a torch and from its tip emanated the flames, like a vast lasso, encircling them all with warmth.

The Inferi bumped into each other, attempting, blindly, to escape the fire in which they were enclosed...

Dumbledore scooped the locket from the bottom of the stone basin and stowed it inside his robes. Wordlessly, he gestured to Harry to come to his side. Distracted by the flames, the Inferi seemed unaware that their quarry was leaving as Dumbledore led Harry back to the boat, the ring of fire moving with them, around them, the bewildered Inferi accompanying them to the water's edge, where they slipped gratefully back into their dark waters.

Chapter 3 -- Promise Fulfilled

At the top of the astronomy tower, Dumbledore struggled to remain standing with his back against the battlement wall.

'We've got a problem, Snape,' said the lumpy Amycus, whose eyes and wand were fixed alike upon Dumbledore, 'the boy doesn't seem able —'

But somebody else had spoken Snape's name, quite softly.

'Severus . . .'

The sound frightened Harry beyond anything he had experienced all evening. For the first time, Dumbledore was pleading.

Snape said nothing, but walked forward and pushed Malfoy roughly out of the way. The three Death Eaters fell back without a word. Even the werewolf seemed cowed.

Snape gazed for a moment at Dumbledore, and there was revulsion and hatred etched in the harsh lines of his face.

‘Severus . . . please . . .’

Snape raised his wand and pointed it directly at Dumbledore.

In the moment before the jet of deadly green light hit him, Dumbledore saw his parents and sister standing with open arms behind Snape.

They were smiling in welcome.

The End

End Notes:

Chapter 1: Text in **bold** is an excerpt from Chapter 13, “Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince” by JK Rowling.

Chapter 2: Text in **bold** is an excerpt from Chapter 26, “Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince” by JK Rowling.

Chapter 3: Text in **bold** is an excerpt from Chapter 27, “Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince” by JK Rowling.