

tray instead, taking three long strides across the room to stand in front of Harry.

“Promise me, Potter,” he whispered furiously, cupping Harry’s cheeks with loving hands. “Promise me you’ll find me, when you join the battle. Promise me we’ll do this together.”

“I will,” he said, glad Draco hadn’t asked for anything more, for a promise he couldn’t make. “I love you.”

“I love you,” Draco said back to him, kissing his lips, then kissing the barely-there lightning bolt scar on his forehead.

Only then did he step back with a shaky breath, jaw clenched as he nodded to the other three. “Good luck. Here,” he added, reaching into his pocket and pulling out a vial of Pain Reliever for Hannah. “You’ll need this.”

She smiled gratefully, then looked to her fellow heirs. “I’ll meet you up there.”

After that, there was no more stalling. Harry had to walk away, leave the love of his life behind knowing that the next time they saw each other they’d be fighting for their lives.

The bustle of the Hospital Wing didn’t stop for them, but everyone was watching as they left.

Harry didn’t want eyes on him, not now, not anymore, and he was fairly sure Neville and Luna felt the same. They didn’t complain when he dragged a secret passage into existence behind a tapestry, leading them into a blessedly quiet stairwell.

He thought about all the people he hadn’t seen yet, all the ones he hadn’t said goodbye to. That was perhaps for the best — if he had to look anyone else he loved in the eye and then walk away, Harry didn’t think he would make it.

Hogwarts was thrumming anxiously in the back of his mind. Or perhaps that was his own anxiety, projected onto a castle that was far too sentient for its own good sometimes.

The door to the Room of Requirement opened, and the Wardstone was revealed.

Now they were in position, Hannah could join them — Dobby brought her whole hospital bed with her in it, positioning it carefully at the West point, not obstructing any of the others but close enough that Hannah could get a hand on the crystal.

Then the little elf threw himself at Harry, hugging him around the knees. “Dobby will protect Hoggywarts, Harry Potter sir,” he swore firmly. Harry patted the elf on the head with a fond smile.

“I know you will, Dobby.”

The house elf disappeared, off to man whatever station he had decided was his for the fighting.

Harry stepped up to the Wardstone, in his usual spot. He looked to Hannah, who was positioned somewhat awkwardly, lying down on the bed with her arm outstretched. “You