

be alive again first. The war was on their doorstep, and it was time to fight on two fronts. “We have to make plans. We have to be ready.”

“You have to sleep,” Remus corrected softly, still holding the vial of potion. “You’ve had one hell of a day, cub. Get some rest. We can make plans when you’ve had time to recover, whenever it’s safe to do so.”

Harry wanted to argue, but he knew the werewolf was right. He was in no state to start planning a war.

“Draco, I should return you to your common room before someone notices you’re missing,” Snape added, gently touching his godson’s shoulder. Draco’s hold on Harry tightened for a moment, and then he sighed.

“The Slytherins will be worried about me,” he agreed. “They’ll want answers. I don’t know what to tell them.”

“As much of the truth as you can,” Snape replied. “They must all soon make choices. We can only hope they make the correct ones.”

Harry wondered how many students in Slytherin — and indeed, in other houses — had a parent who had been present in the graveyard earlier. How many children would be dragged into a war that wasn’t theirs to fight.

Draco cupped Harry’s face, kissing him tenderly. “I’ll see you as soon as I can,” he promised softly, then slid from the bed. He glanced up to Sirius. “Lord Black, I’d like you to write to my mother, but I don’t know if it’s safe for her to receive mail.”

“I can get a message to her,” Sirius assured. “And the offer still stands. Whatever protection the House of Black can give is yours whenever you want it. You’re family, in more ways than one.”

Something in Draco’s shoulders loosened, and he nodded, stepping back. Snape made to leave, but Remus’ hand tightened. “Be careful, Severus,” he pleaded, honey eyes fearful as he met his partner’s gaze. Harry was surprised to see Snape soften, leaning into the touch for the barest moment.

“As careful as I can. I shouldn’t be gone long; the school term isn’t over yet.” Was he headed to speak to the other Death Eaters, Harry wondered? Or to Voldemort himself? Either way, he was walking a dangerous line, even if it was one he’d walked before.

Remus’ hand moved to cover Snape’s heart for a brief moment, then he straightened up, pulling himself together. A practiced move — how often had he let the man he loved walk into the jaws of death? Harry didn’t know how he could bear it.

The two Slytherins left, and Remus stared after them for just a beat too long. “Here,” he said eventually, handing Harry the potion. “You need to rest. If you’re ready?”