

“Go for it,” Harry assented, bracing himself while Bill cast something in a language Harry didn’t recognise. There was a strange *tugging* sensation, both over his scar and around the centre of his chest, and Bill looked relieved. “What was that for?”

“One of the other curse-breakers working on this was wondering if the continued exposure to the horcrux from such a young age might have a sort-of blending effect on the host soul,” Bill explained. “She thought since your magic was growing kind of around the soul fragment, it might assimilate it in a way that makes them almost indistinguishable.” The alarm must have shown on Harry’s face, as Bill quickly continued. “The spell I just did confirmed that they’re two separate, distinct entities. They can be separated,” he assured. Harry visibly slumped in relief. “We don’t know how yet, but we’ll figure it out.”

Bill spoke with such confidence, Harry couldn’t help but believe him. “And the locket?”

“Destroyed,” Bill confirmed.

“Thank fuck,” Harry muttered, though trepidation gathered in his chest. “Though, Bill, I was thinking about something the other day — how much do you know about what happened with Ginny in her first year? With the Chamber of Secrets?”

He’d been toying with the idea ever since they’d discovered the locket and realised his scar wasn’t the only horcrux. The more he thought about it, the more it seemed to make sense.

Bill frowned. “Something about you killing a basilisk? I’ll be honest, Mum and Dad didn’t tell us much.” Harry had expected that. He gave Bill a quick run-down of the events; focusing more on the odd behaviour of Tom Riddle’s diary, and less on the whole basilisk situation. Even so, by the end of the story Bill was wide-eyed and a little green behind his freckles. “Bloody hell, kid.”

“Yeah, there’s a reason Dumbledore swept that one under the rug.” The Prophet would’ve had a field day with the knowledge that the headmaster had let a basilisk roam the school for a year. “Anyway, I think— I think the diary was another horcrux.”

Bill’s face grew grave. “From the sounds of it, I think you might be right.” He quirked an eyebrow. “Don’t suppose you have access to the diary now, so I can run tests on it?”

Harry shook his head — that would’ve been helpful, but considering he used the diary to help free Dobby, he couldn’t regret giving it back.

“Thought as much. Ah, well — I’ll get the team looking into it. I don’t know if there’s any way to find horcruxes — especially not a way that won’t let old Snake-Face know we’re onto him — but at the very least we can start brainstorming for others he might have. He can’t have made too many more; the soul would be too unstable for him to resurrect himself after more than about eight or nine splittings.”

Harry’s stomach lurched at the idea of so many horcruxes existing in the world. “I hope it’s not that many.”