

“I’m afraid that’s not the only thing,” Gorrak continued, as if Harry wasn’t suffering enough. “Though this is probably less of a surprise. There’s heavy residue of dark magic, situated around your scar. Unfortunately, this is not familiar to me, though I can have a team research it if you wish, and with any luck they will figure out how to remove it. No one has survived the killing curse until you, Mr Potter — that magic is foreign to both wizards and goblins. I cannot remove it, and am reluctant to attempt such in case it harms you. As it stands, it does not seem to be doing you any damage.”

Relief flooded Harry — that one was less worrying. He had always assumed there was something strange about his scar, since it never truly healed. Curse residue would make sense. If it wasn’t hurting now, they might as well leave it alone.

“But what about the block, and the spell? Can they be removed?” he asked tentatively, his gut churning at the prospect of having to live with the limit on his magic forever, like some sort of ticking time bomb. Seventeen felt like ages away, but it wouldn’t be far off.

“They can,” Gorrak confirmed. Harry sighed in relief, shoulders slumping. “Farlig, please guard the door.” The lock clicked, and Farlig stood in front of the door with his shoulders squared, his jaw set. “Mr Potter, if you wouldn’t mind standing.”

When Harry stood, Gorrak snapped his fingers, and the chair he’d just been sat in turned into a low bed, like the kind in a doctor’s office. “Please lie down on your back.” Harry did, heart racing. Letting a goblin he’d only just met perform magic on him made his survival instinct snarl, but he refused to spend any longer with a block on his magic. Besides, what was he going to do, write to Dumbledore about it? Not after everything he’d discovered today!

“This may hurt, Mr Potter.” That was all the warning Gorrak gave before he began chanting. It again was in an unfamiliar language, and as soon as the chant started up Harry’s body began to glow white, his skin growing warm. He gripped the edges of the bed, forcing his eyes to remain open, even when the sensation turned sharp. A cry escaped his lips — it felt almost like something was sucking at him. No, *biting*. Like a creature had sunk their teeth in and refused to let go, while Gorrak was pulling it out of his body. Above his heart, the glow turned darker, and Harry watched in horror as a ball of black magic began to form above him. The ball grew bigger and bigger, Gorrak’s forehead glistening with sweat as he chanted and moved his hands, fighting against the foreign magic in Harry’s body.

Harry couldn’t have said how long he was on the table for, but eventually Gorrak’s chanting grew louder, and he wrenched his hands up high, sending the ball of black magic careening away from Harry and towards a crystal Harry had just noticed on the desk. The crystal turned from white to black in an instant, and the glow around Harry faded. “You may sit up, Mr Potter,” Gorrak declared, sounding breathless. Harry did so. The goblin sank into the chair opposite, leaning heavily on one elbow. “Whoever placed those curses certainly did not want to give up without a fight, but it is done. I took the liberty of retaining samples of the magic — should you reach a time where you wish to press charges against an individual, this can be used to compare magical signatures and prove guilt.”

Gorrak looked him in the eye, and it was clear the goblin also had a good idea of who placed the spells. Harry grimaced. “Thank you.” He didn’t know if he’d ever need it, but it was good