

“The Nation’s congratulations on your freedom, Lord Black,” Farlig said. “I understand you wish to review the Black accounts?”

Harry left him to it, shuffling over with Bill and Gorrak. “How is progress going?” he asked. To his shock, the Weasley and the goblin shared a toothy grin.

“That’s one of the reasons I asked Gorrak here, actually,” Bill started. “I don’t know where Snape got that book, but it’s exactly what we needed. We know how to get the horcrux out of you.”

Harry stared at him, the words echoing in his brain. “I— really?”

“We can perform the ritual as soon as you are ready, Mr Potter,” Gorrak confirmed.

Harry’s heart soared — and quickly fell, once a thought occurred to him. “I can’t, yet,” he realised, feeling sick. “The visions... I can’t stop having them. I’ve already saved lives with them, I can’t risk that going away.” Without the horcrux, he would no longer have the connection to Voldemort’s mind. There would be no early warning if anything should happen again like it had almost happened to the Bones’, or to Mr Weasley last Christmas.

Bill’s brow furrowed. “It’s dangerous to keep it, Harry. He could send you false visions to trap you; he’s already tried it once. The longer he knows about the connection, the higher the chance he might figure out what it really is.”

“I know, but I just... I need a little more time.” He just needed to see how bad things were going to get. How many other people he could save. “How long does the ritual take to prepare?”

“Half an hour,” Gorrak responded. “We could even do it right now, if you wished.”

“I can’t,” Harry insisted sadly.

“I don’t like this, Harry.” Bill was frowning. “Having that thing inside you... it’s not good for you.”

“It’s been there fifteen years almost, what’s a few more months going to make?” Harry retorted. “I promise, as soon as it looks like things need to change — if it gets dangerous, or he becomes too aware — I’ll have it removed. But... I can do good things with it, right now.” His lips twisted bitterly. “It’s not like I can kill him even if we do destroy it. We still don’t know where the rest are, if he has any more.”

“The cursebreaking team have been doing some research on that front, as well,” Gorrak supplied. “We believe with confidence that it is impossible for any more than nine horcruxes to be made without the soul dissolving entirely. So at the very least, there is an upper limit.”

That wasn’t nearly as comforting as Harry would like it to be. “Is there a way of tracking them?”

Gorrak and Bill shook their heads. “We’ve been trying to figure out where the rest might be,” Bill assured. “But considering where the ones we know about were, we don’t have much to