

“Oh my,” Dumbledore greeted, frowning, leaning forward in his chair. “Whatever is the matter?”

“Potter’s had a nightmare,” McGonagall said, and had Harry been paying attention he would’ve seen the brief flash of triumph pass through Dumbledore’s gaze. As it was he was trying his best *not* to look the man in the eye, sure his Occlumency shields would be scrambled to all hell.

“Not a nightmare,” he insisted. “It was real. Sir, Mr Weasley’s been attacked by a snake, he needs help.” *He’s dying*, he thought desperately, heart clenched.

“How did you see this?” Dumbledore asked, and for a second Harry thought the man was just *outright asking* Harry about his connection with Voldemort.

“In a dream, but it wasn’t a dream, more like a- a vision?” He stuttered, only half faking his confusion.

“You misunderstand me,” Dumbledore pressed. “Where were you, in the dream? Watching from above, perhaps?”

*Oh*, Harry thought, followed by, *he knows*.

He knew exactly what had caused Harry to travel outside his own mind that night.

“I was the snake,” he admitted, and suddenly a horrifying thought occurred to him.

He had been within the snake’s mind, just like he was sometimes inside Voldemort’s. And it had felt comfortable. More comfortable than he anticipated an animal being possessed would feel.

The snake was a horcrux.

His lips pressed tightly together as he tried not to react to this realisation — thankfully, Dumbledore at least seemed to care about Mr Weasley’s life more than his own academic curiosity; he was talking to a couple of the paintings, telling them to raise the alarm. The two disappeared from their framed immediately.

“But he could be anywhere!” Ron burst out in a panic, and Harry’s jaw clenched.

Dumbledore knew exactly where Mr Weasley was, because he’d sent him there.

The Department of Mysteries. Guarding that *fucking* prophecy.

Did Voldemort really think his *snake* would be able to get to it? Or was he just using her to scope the place out?

“You’re still shaking, Potter. Sit down,” McGonagall urged softly, nudging Harry towards one of the chintz armchairs opposite the desk.