

“Right. *Fuck*.” Bill ran a hand over his face. “At least we know. Bugger all we can do about that one, with how close he keeps her.”

That was definitely a problem for a future night. “Do you think he wanted me to see it?” If Voldemort knew he could see into the snake as well as his own head, would he start suspecting the truth?

Bill shrugged. “No way to tell. But if it helps, I don’t think so. He might not even know you’ve seen it. In fact, you’d probably know if he did. Didn’t you say you can feel it when he’s pissed off?” A ghost of a smile crossed Bill’s face. “I’d say raising the alarm in time to get Dad to St Mungo’s would probably piss him off, if he knew it was you.”

That made sense, and Harry finally felt like he could breathe.

“Come on,” Bill urged. “Let’s go back to the kitchen. Unless — you didn’t actually need the loo, did you?”

Harry snorted, shaking his head, and let Bill gently corral him back to the gathering in the kitchen. Now he was looking properly, he realised Sirius had redecorated in here, too — not massively, but where there had once been dark wallpaper there was now cheery duck-egg blue paint, and he’d replaced the grimy old tiles with fresh white ones. The floor, too, had been cleaned until the dark grey stone gleamed.

Sirius offered him another cup of tea. They all sat in silence for a long, long time.

Harry didn’t know what to do. There was nothing he could say to make it better, especially not when anything he might say would likely be of the vein that when he felt his fangs going in, he didn’t feel any bones break, so that was probably good.

That wouldn’t be reassuring to anyone.

Sirius kept a hand on the back of his neck for a while, a soothing weight, and absently Harry wondered if Remus was around. He didn’t ask, though. It didn’t seem appropriate.

At around three, Bill got a message from his mother; a request to come to the hospital. Apparently, someone had been sent to his flat, but he obviously wasn’t there.

The note didn’t say anything about Mr Weasley’s status. Bill was grey-faced when he flooded out of the kitchen.

It was ten past five by the time anything else happened; all of them were beginning to doze off around the table, but stubbornly refused to go to bed. Harry didn’t feel he could go up, even though he felt like he’d been hit by the Hogwarts Express, not when his friends were worrying. Not when they didn’t know if Mr Weasley would make it.

When Mrs Weasley finally strode through the door, Harry was jostled abruptly as his pillow — George’s shoulder — moved, the redhead turning to look at his mum.

“He’s going to be alright,” she announced, exhaustion threading her voice. “Bill’s sitting with him now. We can all go see him later.”