

“I expect Dumbledore is warning her now.”

Ginny had to be talked down from haring off to St Mungo’s, reminded that if even Mrs Weasley hadn’t been informed by the hospital yet, it would look mighty suspicious if all her kids showed up with Harry Potter in tow.

“Let’s all just settle down,” Bill said, his low voice calm, and his siblings reluctantly took seats at the table. “Even if we went to St Mungo’s, there’s nothing we can do to help. Dad’s being seen by the healers, they’ll be doing everything they can. Better for us to wait here than over there. Hospital tea is shit,” he added with a weak laugh, raising his cup towards Sirius. Only Charlie snorted at the joke.

The younger Weasleys didn’t seem convinced, but none dared argue with their eldest brother.

Harry sipped at his tea, hands trembling around his cup. Sirius took the seat beside him, leaning close until their shoulders were pressed together. “You alright, pup?”

A jerky nod. Then, smaller, a shake of his head. How could he be alright after seeing something like that?

It was a thousand times worse than the endless corridor running of his usual Department of Mysteries dreams. It was even worse than the occasional time he got a direct line into one of the Death Eater meetings, watching — *feeling* — Voldemort torture his loyal subjects.

This was a visceral attack on a man Harry had known since he was twelve, a man who had always treated him with kindness. If Mr Weasley died...

Harry clenched his jaw tight. He wouldn’t think like that. He couldn’t.

Fawkes flashed in with a note from Mrs Weasley, telling them her husband was still alive and she was on her way to the hospital. Far from reassuring them, it just made the Weasley children realise how dire their father’s situation was. Harry’s stomach roiled, and he jumped to his feet. “I need the loo,” he declared, practically sprinting from the kitchen.

He vaguely noticed that Mrs Black’s portrait was no longer on the wall, tearing past it and heading for the small toilet just beneath the stairs. He retched into the sink, bringing up the tea he’d just drank, hot tears leaking from his eyes.

“Easy, kid.” It was Bill, and for a moment Harry was struck by how similar he and Fred had sounded that he almost laughed. The curse-breaker’s hand rubbed soothingly at his back. “Any more coming up?”

Harry shook his head. “Don’t think so.” He turned, meeting Bill’s gaze intently. “Bill. The vision— being inside the snake felt like being inside Voldemort’s head. *Exactly* like it.”

The redhead’s tanned face was pale and waxy. “I had a feeling you might say that,” he sighed. “She’s another, then?”

“She’s got to be.” A fourth horcrux. How many had the man even made??