

of a muggleborn or *blood-traitor* parent at the hands of the Death Eaters — always described as an *unfortunate accident* — or a genuine letter of condolence for a child whose Death Eater parent lost their life.

No one was safe from the prospect of a black envelope. Except, of course, those like Harry — those who had no blood family to be notified about.

This morning, Harry spotted four in the delivery; two headed to the Ravenclaw table, one to Slytherin, and the last to a Gryffindor second year who went the colour of sour milk when the envelope landed on the table in front of him.

One of the Ravenclaws fled sobbing from the hall. Harry's stomach turned. He wasn't hungry anymore.

Ignoring the concerned look in Neville's hazel eyes, Harry shoved his plate aside and stood abruptly, trying not to shudder under the heavy gazes of those who watched him leave.

Were they thinking the same thing he was? Probably. They certainly hadn't been quiet about it in the past.

He was Harry Potter — the Chosen One. He was supposed to be stopping Voldemort, stopping the Dark before anyone else's parents or cousins or siblings could die. Before any more of those black envelopes could be sent.

Every single one was another nail right in his heart, another reminder that he was safe in school while the rest of the world was not. More than once, a recipient of a black envelope had screamed at him over breakfast, blaming him for the death of their loved one. Harry was never sure what to say to that — they were right, of course; he wasn't moving fast enough, was wasting time going to classes and snogging his boyfriend and just *waiting to turn seventeen* while outside the castle, the fight continued.

A hand suddenly gripped his shoulder, and Harry whirled around with a glare — a glare that faltered at the sight of knowing silver-grey eyes.

Draco tugged him into an empty classroom, warding the door and turning to face Harry, arms crossed over his chest. "Whatever self-flagellating bullshit you've got in your head right now, drop it," the Slytherin ordered. Harry grit his teeth.

"It's not *self-flagellating bullshit*," he sneered in response. "I could have stopped these, Draco — or at least helped! If I hadn't got rid of that bloody horcrux in my mind, I could've seen his plans. Some of those people might still be alive." It was a thought he had every single time black envelopes arrived. He had led the Order to help so many over the summer, by getting early insight into Voldemort's plans. How was that fair to all the attacks that came after?

Draco scoffed. "He was blocking you long before you got rid of it," he pointed out. "You wouldn't have seen shit." He reached out, and Harry only fought him for a moment, reluctantly letting the taller boy pull him close. "You aren't responsible for every person he