

This one, too, was full of animal skeletons and moss, so Harry happily blasted it with cleaning charms as he walked.

“Everything is disgusting,” he warned, but Snape just hummed.

When they made it to the main Chamber, even the reserved Slytherin couldn’t hide his gasp. Harry stepped aside, letting Snape get the full view of the Chamber proper — and the huge dead snake within.

Snape slowly approached the basilisk, his wide eyes trailing over its immense size. “Jesus *fucking* Christ, Potter,” he breathed, and Harry almost tripped over his own feet; he had never heard Snape use such muggle swears in his life. “This thing was living under the castle the whole time?”

“I did tell you it was big,” Harry said, only for the man to round on him.

“Big? Big! This has to be at least sixty foot of deadly serpent!” Snape turned back to the basilisk, running a gentle hand over the scales. “In remarkably good condition, too, having been dead for several years.” He walked further up beside the body, finally coming to the mangled head.

“Fawkes clawed out its eyes,” Harry said with an unnecessary gesture to the bloody holes gauged in its face. “And if the brain is useful for anything, I don’t know what shape this one is in, because I sort-of stabbed it with a sword.” Here he pointed out the hole in the roof of the snake’s mouth. “Also there might still be venom in one of the fangs but the other one broke off in my arm.” It was still there, actually, lying on the stone floor next to the congealed black ink-spill from Riddle’s diary. “But whatever you can get from it that’s useful, you’re welcome to keep. I just want it out of here.”

Snape looked like he was about to faint. Whether that was at the idea of Harry facing the snake at twelve, or the concept of being allowed to harvest and keep the entire thing, he wasn’t sure.

“This snake; the Chamber?” Snape rounded on Harry, “*these* are the things you need adult supervision for.”

“In my defence, we did bring Lockhart. An attempt at supervision was made.”

From the look on Snape’s face, Lockhart absolutely did not count.

“This is millions of galleons just of scale alone!” Snape actually looked conflicted. “I can’t keep this, Potter. By all rights, this whole thing belongs to you. You could sell it for half the gold in Gringotts.”

“I don’t *want* half the gold in Gringotts,” Harry pointed out dryly. “I don’t want any of it. Except maybe enough scales for some battle armour, I *do* want that.” Over the summer, Tonks had shown him her dragon-hide battle armour, and Harry was incredibly jealous.