

even looking anywhere near Harry. “I think he’s worried about what Voldemort can see through me. I think... I think he’s worried Voldemort can do Legilimency from within my mind.”

Remus ran a hand through his hair, letting out a slow breath. “That would explain some of the things Albus has said through Order meetings. Nothing blatant,” he added at Harry’s alarmed look. “Just cryptic comments about making sure you don’t know too much. Sirius and I thought he was just trying to keep you oblivious because he was worried you might piece things together about him, now you’ve broken free of the compulsions.”

“But he’s worried Voldemort can get into my mind, properly.” A bolt of fear shot through Harry. “He can’t, can he?”

“Absolutely not,” Remus said firmly. “Severus has checked for himself; your Occlumency shields are good, and the connection doesn’t work that way. He can access your dreams, draw you into his own mind, but he can’t get at your thoughts or memories.” He gave a wry, bitter smile. “If Voldemort knew what you knew, a lot more people would be dead; Severus likely at the top of the list.”

That was true. The tension eased from Harry’s shoulders. “But the longer he has to research the connection, the higher the chance of him figuring out I’m a horcrux.” Suddenly, he wished he’d been able to stay at Hogwarts for Christmas — the three weeks of break would have been a perfect time to scour Salazar’s library. “I want it out of me, Moony.”

Wiry arms wrapped around him. “I know, cub. Bill’s working on it, I promise you. But as awful as it is, it did allow you to save Arthur’s life last night.” He kissed the crown of Harry’s head. “And look on the bright side; at least Albus will keep out of your head, if he thinks you’ve got company in there.”

A weak smile tugged at Harry’s cheeks. That was a small victory, all things considered; but he’d take it.

He just worried what Dumbledore might do to try and get Voldemort *out*.

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To the delight of mostly just Ron and Mrs Weasley, Hermione showed up at Grimmauld Place the next evening; Hogwarts had finished for Christmas, and apparently she had changed her mind about skiing with her parents.

Harry didn’t really care either way; he was keeping to himself for the most part, regardless. The twins and Ginny had mostly accepted his explanation that he knew why he’d seen through the snake’s eyes but he couldn’t tell them, but no one was really in the mood to do anything.

Sirius tried to keep them all busy with hanging Christmas decorations, saying that now he was done with his refurbishment of the house, it deserved to get dressed up for the occasion. Mostly it seemed a way to keep Ron and Hermione away from Harry, as they were all separated into the same pairs they’d been in for the summer’s cleaning efforts.