

## Chapter 40

Harry and Remus returned home to find Sirius had joined Severus in his waiting — Harry had told him about Bill's letter over the mirror before going to bed the night before.

In all the emotion of visiting his family vaults, Harry had almost forgotten about Bill's revelation. He twisted his fingers in the cuffs of his robes as he sat down on the living room sofa. "Bill knows what the magic in my scar is," he declared, not meeting anyone's eyes. "It's something called a horcrux."

Snape cursed, which startled Harry into looking up incredulously. His usually impassive Potions Master had horror in his dark eyes. "Is he certain?"

"You know what that is, then?" Remus asked in shock. Snape nodded.

"I've heard of them before. Honestly I'd thought them a myth. I certainly never expected they could be made from a living creature."

"Would someone please explain to me what a horcrux is?" Sirius bit out impatiently. Harry found himself lost for words, but luckily Remus wasn't. He filled Sirius in, glancing at Snape every now and then to check their information matched up, forging on when the Slytherin nodded. With every word, Sirius grew paler.

"There's a piece of that monster inside Harry's scar?" he croaked, rushing to Harry's side. "How do we get it out?"

"Bill doesn't know yet," Harry said weakly. "He's going to do some research."

"I will do some research of my own as well," Snape assured. "I'm sure I have some alternate avenues to Mr Weasley." He still looked shaken, leaning against the back of one of the armchairs. "Considering the circumstances, Potter, I believe there is something I should tell you. Something Dumbledore insists you not learn until the time is right."

"Until he's ready for me to die, you mean," Harry realised. Snape nodded sharply.

Harry's stomach was already a mess of knots and anxiety, and he didn't see how things could get much worse. "Tell me."

Snape told him of a job interview. He told him of a scared young man desperate to please his master, eavesdropping on a woman and an old man in the back room of a dirty pub. He told him of a prophecy.

"I only heard the first half. Albus Dumbledore is the only person alive who knows the full extent of the prophecy, and he has not seen fit to share it with me — or with you. I'm not sure what he hopes to gain from keeping you ignorant, but until we learn what the rest of the prophecy says, we may never know."