

Salazar stopped reading, and Harry went wide-eyed. *“Does it say how?”* he pressed. Salazar nodded.

*“It does, but I will be honest, I do not expect you to understand it, lad.”* His tone was not designed to be disparaging, but it made Harry scowl all the same. He looked at the book, and at the utter gibberish on the page — both in the writing itself and in the form of the complex Arithmantic diagrams of some kind of ritual. Salazar had a point; even if the whole thing were in modern English, Harry likely wouldn’t make heads nor tails of it.

But he knew who would.

*“I need to show this book to my friend,”* he hissed. *“He works for the goblins, as a curse-breaker. His team is trying to find a way to remove the horcrux from my scar.”*

*“You may make a copy of it,”* Salazar assented. *“The original texts will not leave this office, but I doubt any of them are still under Copyright Charms. Duplicate it, and take it to your friend.”*

Harry waved his wand, and sure enough the book duplicated easily. He quickly put the original back on the shelf, before he forgot which was which. *“My friend is going to ask where I found this,”* he said cautiously. Salazar’s expression soured.

*“Now is not yet the time to reveal my presence to the world,”* he insisted.

*“One person is not ‘the world’,”* Harry retorted defensively. *“Bill can keep a secret.”* He’d done well so far, keeping Harry’s.

Salazar still didn’t look impressed, but he let the argument slide.

Then Harry realised there was one more obstacle. His only way of getting the book out of Hogwarts quickly was Snape, and he would *definitely* want to know where it came from. And to see for himself what sort of obscure magics Harry was discovering. *“How would you feel about me inviting the head of Slytherin House down here? He is helping with this research, and he would likely be more useful than I would.”*

He waited patiently for Salazar to consider the subject. *“This is the man who plays triple agent? He is family to you?”* he clarified, and Harry nodded. A flicker of a smile crossed the man’s painted face. *“He is a worthy Slytherin. You may bring him.”*

Relief filled Harry’s veins. That would make his life easier; not in the least because it would ingratiate him to Snape even more than letting him harvest the basilisk had. Harry was going to introduce him to *Salazar Slytherin himself*, let him look through the founder’s private library.

Snape was going to *love* him.

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Valentine’s Day arrived in a flurry of excited students — and an increase in detentions due to *inappropriate behaviour*. It seemed Umbridge considered almost any expression of positive