

“What happens if we kill Voldemort before we destroy the horcrux?” Harry asked curiously.

“He’ll go back to being the shade creature that possessed Professor Quirrell,” Bill explained. “With the potential to return again. We’d have peace, but it would be temporary. We’d be constantly on the lookout for his return.”

“And with the number of followers he has, it’d only be a matter of time before someone helped him do it,” Harry said grimly. If Wormtail could manage it, it couldn’t be that difficult. “Well, you can rule out basilisk venom. I got bitten by one when I was twelve, but then again I didn’t actually die from it; Fawkes healed me. So maybe it only works if I die.”

Bill’s blue eyes went wide. “I thought Ginny was joking about that,” he muttered faintly. Remus snorted.

“Never assume anything is a joke when it comes to Harry,” he advised. If the situation weren’t so dire, Harry would’ve grinned.

“Well. At least now we know what we’re up against,” Harry pointed out. As soon as they could figure out how to get the horcrux out of Harry, Voldemort was mortal. And if they couldn’t, well... there were worse ways to go than dying to save the world. “Gorrak, feel free to use the money from any of my vaults to fund whatever’s necessary for this research. I trust you.”

The goblin bowed his head, and the look on Bill’s face made Harry feel like those words weren’t often said from wizard to goblin.

“While I’ve got you here, Harry, can I do some more in-depth scans?” Bill requested. Harry shrugged, assenting; whatever might help.

Once again, Harry found himself lying back on a transfigured medical bed in a back office in Gringotts. Bill pulled out his notebook and pen, and he and Gorrak both spent the next fifteen minutes murmuring spells in all sorts of languages, making lights glow around Harry and strange tingling sensations happen and even at one point a loud noise like a gun going off. Harry stayed still through all of it, though his curiosity burned. He’d never experienced so much raw magic before, it was exhilarating!

“Blimey, Harry. Your core’s a bit massive, isn’t it?” Bill remarked, gesturing for him to sit up. “Happy to report there’s no adverse effects from all the years sitting under the block. If anything, it’s grown extra big to spite that — have you noticed your magic doing anything unusual in the last year or so? More instances of accidental magic, emotional discharges, that sort of thing?”

“I mean, yeah, but doesn’t everyone rattle the windows every now and then?” He’d seen Sirius and Snape do it a couple of times, when they got really angry.

“Not usually,” Remus piped up. Harry blinked.

“Oh. Well that was all happening before, too, so I didn’t really notice. I’m a lot better at spells than I used to be.” Before the block he’d been a fairly average wizard; certainly