

With a ball of light glowing overhead, Harry told Draco the truth — all of it, including the matter of the fragment of Voldemort's soul within Harry's own head. With every word, the blond's face grew more and more horrified.

"So that's why Occlumency doesn't help with my visions," he finished. "I can keep him out of my mind, but dreams are a sort-of... in-between space. And he's not putting much effort into keeping me out of his."

"And he doesn't know? That part of— that it's inside you?"

Harry shook his head. "Not as far as we're aware. But Dumbledore knows. That's why he blocked my magic, we think. So that he could use me to destroy both the horcrux and Voldemort himself, once the time was right. Then he could swoop in and play the devastated mentor, and keep the country eating out of the palm of his hand."

The horror on Draco's face was replaced by a scowl. "He's lucky he's already dying, the bastard," he muttered. "I'd kill him myself for what he's done to you."

Harry gave Draco a chaste kiss, stroking his face. "It's fine. Like Bill said, there's no more than three others out there, maximum. Probably less. We know how to get the one out of my scar, so we've just got to find a couple more, kill the snake, and then I can end it."

Draco tilted forward, until their foreheads were pressed together. "I wish you'd let the Gringotts team destroy the one in your head," he whispered. "But I know you won't. Fucking Gryffindor." Harry laughed quietly, fingers threading through Draco's hair.

"I've saved lives with that connection," he said. "You can't ask me to give it up for my own comfort."

A quiet sigh escaped Draco's lips. "I know. I'm not asking. But... can I stay here tonight?" He pulled back, grey eyes hopeful, tentative. "It's a hell of a lot to take in. I just— I just want to hold you. Please?"

Harry couldn't say no to that. He tugged back the duvet, shuffling them both to lie down beneath it. Draco pulled him close, Harry's back to his chest, a kiss fluttering across Harry's temple. "Promise me," he breathed, barely a whisper. "Promise me you'll get rid of it if it starts looking dangerous. If it starts looking like he's manipulating the link."

Harry put his hands over Draco's, melting back into the warmth of his boyfriend's body. Really, that was more than he could ask for — he wasn't sure he would be this calm, had their positions been reversed. "I promise," he vowed, curling his foot around Draco's ankle. "I want to survive this war, Draco. That wasn't always true, but now — now I know what's waiting on the other end of it. I won't take stupid risks. I won't let him kill me when I'm so close to winning."

Draco squeezed him tighter, his steady breath hot on Harry's neck.

Nothing more was said between them, but nothing else needed to be.