

sad. “You know Severus isn’t to blame for all this. He’s spent the last fifteen years trying to repent for that one little mistake. He cares about you.”

“I know,” Harry agreed quietly. He wished he had the words to explain the mess inside his head. “I’m not—I’m not mad at him. Voldemort and Dumbledore are the only ones at fault here. Manipulating others for their own gain. I just... today has been a lot.”

“Moony told us you visited the heirloom vaults,” Sirius said. Harry nodded. “I wish I could’ve been with you, pup. One day I will. I’ll tell you everything I can remember about whatever we find in there.” The dog animagus shuffled up the bed to bring Harry into a hug, lips pressing to his hair. “You’re not alone, Harry. Whatever happens next — with the horcrux, the prophecy, everything — we aren’t going to let you face him alone.”

“That was Dumbledore’s plan,” Harry pointed out. Sirius scoffed.

“Dumbledore can go fuck a hippogriff,” he declared vehemently. “His plans are usually terrible for everyone but himself, and I for one am done with going along with them.” Sirius smiled. “We’ll figure this out. From what Severus tells us, Bill Weasley is a smart chap, and Severus himself has more knowledge of the Dark Arts than anyone else I know. There’s got to be a way. You can’t give up hope.” He kissed Harry’s scar, then pulled back. “I’ll see you when I can, alright? I love you.”

“Love you too,” Harry replied automatically, managing a faint half-smile as his godfather left. When he was alone once more, he slumped back against his pillows, squeezing his eyes shut.

Merlin, he needed a nap.

.-.-. .

Over the next few days, Harry didn’t leave his room much. He appeared for meals but was silent through them, and when he didn’t show up for his training neither Snape nor Remus called him down. Snape seemed to be avoiding him as much as possible, often skipping meals in favour of brewing potions. Remus just looked at Harry like his heart was being torn in two by the silence. Harry wished he could reassure the man, but he didn’t know what to say. All his words dried up in his throat. He didn’t hate Snape, but every time he tried to say it he thought of the piece of Voldemort’s soul lodged in his head and how it was maybe Snape’s fault it was there, and sure, okay, he couldn’t have known that would happen but he had still been in a place in his life where following a man like Voldemort without hesitation had been an option — no, a *joy* — for him, and how the hell was Harry supposed to understand that when Snape had Remus in his life?

Remus, who was classified as a dark creature but who rescued baby birds and helped them back to their nests. Remus, who always had a kind word for everyone, and believed chocolate was the cure for everything. Remus, who had seen Harry so alone and desperate for family, and given him stories of his parents even when it had to be hurting him to think of them.

If Snape could have Remus and still become a Death Eater, what hope did Harry have? He hadn’t known love for most of his life, and now he had it he wasn’t even sure he could keep