

Harry coughed a laugh — it was hard to imagine something as mundane as riding the Hogwarts Express when the Dark Lord had just stormed the Ministry.

For once, he trusted the adults when they said there was nothing he could do. And he *was* tired. “Okay. I’ll, uh, see you all in the morning.”

“Come on, Scarhead,” Draco murmured, helping him towards the stairs.

Harry grinned. “You’ll have to think of something else to call me when this heals,” he retorted playfully, and Draco rolled his eyes.

“I’m sure I can think of something.”

He walked with Harry to the Gryffindor’s bedroom, deft hands unbuttoning Harry’s shirt, gently running over his shoulders as he eased the garment off. Whatever the stuff Bill drew runes on him with was, it had disappeared by the end of the ritual. Harry let Draco undress him, and crawled into bed to watch the blond strip down to his underwear, shuffling in beside him. “Won’t be able to do this when we get back to school,” Draco sighed, leaning in for a kiss. Harry hummed sadly — that was the worst part about going back, in his opinion. He’d grown entirely too used to having Draco around to cuddle all the time.

After a Headache Reliever followed by a Tooth-Cleaning charm and half a glass of water, Harry sank back against the pillows with a relieved groan, snuggling into Draco’s side.

“I expected to feel it missing,” he admitted quietly. Draco stroked his hair, humming.

“Maybe you will, once the dust has settled,” he murmured. “But maybe you won’t. It was never truly part of you, after all.” Dry lips pressed to Harry’s temple. “I’m just glad it’s gone. I hated the thought of him having access to your mind. Hated even more having to watch you get pulled into his.”

Harry burrowed closer, wrapping himself around Draco so excessively it made the blond huff with laughter. “I just hope I don’t regret it.” Whatever Voldemort did next, there would always be a small part of Harry wondering if he could have stopped it, if he’d kept the horcrux for just a little bit longer.

But he couldn’t let himself go down that path; not if he wanted to keep his sanity. Whatever was coming would happen, and they would face it the best they could.