

horcruxes as they died. Harry tried not to flinch, didn't dare look away until the smoke had dissipated, even as the wards went haywire in his mind at such a strong concentration of danger. He hoped the other heirs didn't get alerted, hoped the castle knew he had this handled.

Then there was silence, but for the slow hiss and sputter of the silver and jewels melting to nothing under the power of the basilisk venom, creating a disgusting puddle on the crystal slab. After a few moments, Snape flicked his wand, vanishing the mess. Both of them stared at each other grimly.

"Well, then," Harry murmured eventually. "Just the snake left, you think?" He wanted to believe Snape's logic, wanted *so much* to know that they were almost done.

"We shall do what research we can to confirm," Snape replied. "But I truly do think so."

It would be a disaster, if they were wrong.

But if they were right.

If they were right, it changed *everything*.