

with panicked breaths. “Guess we’ve just got to dispose of this little bugger and then it’s another one ticked off the list.” The redhead glanced at Harry. “Any preferences?”

“As long as it’s definitely dead, I don’t care.” Harry just wanted it *gone*.

“Fair enough. Step back, then. Might as well make sure it’s done properly.”

Harry did so, and Bill raised his wand, blue eyes narrowed in concentration. The rat stared back, like it was aware of what was to come.

“*Fiendfyre*.”

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Charlie and Harry appeared at the edge of the wards to Seren Du, and immediately Sirius lunged forward, wrapping them both in a hug. “How did it go? Are you okay?” he asked urgently, pushing back Harry’s hair to survey his forehead. The scar looked fresh and raw, like it did after one of his visions, but Bill had told him the wound would probably heal for good now the dark magic was gone. Harry would have to keep a glamour up, if he didn’t want Dumbledore to realise what he’d done.

“I’m fine. It’s gone,” Harry confirmed, leaning into his godfather’s touch. Merlin, he was exhausted. “How are things at the Ministry?”

“Fucked, but there’s nothing we can do about it,” Sirius answered with a grimace, arm slipping around Harry’s waist to help him back towards the house. “He’s claimed the building, so anyone who works there will either follow orders or just not go back.”

“What do we do now?” Fear gripped Harry’s chest — if Voldemort had the Ministry, would it even be safe to go back to Hogwarts?

“We get you to school tomorrow, because as much as I hate Dumbledore, that snake-faced bastard won’t touch you if you’re in the castle.”

“What about everyone else?” Harry pressed — what about all the Ministry workers who *didn’t* support Voldemort?

Sirius’ face turned grim. “We’ll worry about that later.”

When they stepped inside the house, Draco was right at Harry’s side, grey eyes worried.

“I’m fine,” Harry assured, stepping out of his godfather’s embrace and into his boyfriend’s. “I’m just tired. The ritual took a lot out of me.” Even his *magic* ached, though he wasn’t sure how that was even possible.

“Go on up to bed, cub,” Remus urged — Harry hadn’t even realised the werewolf was there. He looked up, blinking, to find the entire household was gathered in the entrance hall, staring at him with varying degrees of concern. “It’s late, and you’ve got to go to school tomorrow.”