"*Do you know anything about horcruxes?*"

Immediately, Salazar's expression grew thunderous. "*The Slytherin family magics will not allow you to pervert yourself in such a way,*" he said, a hissing snarl. Harry went wide-eyed.

"*No, no, not for me! Voldemort — Tom Riddle — he has horcruxes. I need to know how to find and destroy them.*" Salazar relaxed a little, though his upper lip was still curled. "*There's… there's a horcrux of his, inside me. I was hoping you might know how to get it out.*"

Harry explained, raising his fringe to show his scar, telling Salazar of the goblins' scans and their current search for a solution. "*If I need to die to be rid of him, I'll do it,*" he said bluntly. "*Obviously, I'd quite like a different option.*"

"*Indeed,*" Salazar agreed, brow furrowed in thought. "*It was not common, for horcruxes to be housed in a living vessel. Then again, it was not common for horcruxes to exist at all. But I encountered them a few times, in my travels.*" He raised a hand, gesturing to the bookshelf on the opposite wall. "*I believe there are a few books on the subject in my collection. Memory escapes me on the specifics, but you're welcome to take a look.*"

Harry looked at the expansive number of books that made up Salazar Slytherin's private library.

It was going to be a long night.

.-.-.

He retreated from the Chamber a little after midnight, his eyes crossing behind his glasses from the strain of reading the ancient books. They were in surprisingly decent shape, but half of them weren't even in English — at least, not any form of English Harry recognised. Even with Translation charms, it was slow work looking for any mention of horcruxes and soul magic.

Especially because he kept getting distracted reading about magic and theories that had fallen out of use in the last thousand years. It was *fascinating*.

One day, he promised, he would take Remus in there. Or at the very least, copy the books for him to read himself. Draco and Snape, too; all three of them were absolute nerds, and would probably commit murder for the chance to read such rare texts.

Harry snuck back into Gryffindor Tower, and was surprised to see Neville sat in the common room by the dying fire, hunched over the table with a couple of textbooks open, quill scribbling furiously. He looked up, wheat-blond hair falling into his eyes. "There you are!" he greeted quietly.

"Were you waiting up for me?" Harry asked guiltily. Neville shook his head.

"Nah, just forgot about Binns' essay til about an hour ago," he confessed sheepishly. "Where have you been?"