

Harry stands to face him, shoving his feet in his shoes. Both boys clutch their wands.

HARRY  
The locket.

Harry holds his hand out towards Ron. Ron doesn't move just looks down at the locket in his hand.

HARRY (CONT'D)  
Ron, the locket. Give me the locket.

Ron holds the Horcrux out between them. His grip remains firm. The Horcrux dangles in the space between the two boys.

HARRY (CONT'D)  
Please, Ron! What -

RON  
It's moving. It's moving by itself.

HARRY  
It tried to kill me in the water.

RON  
Harry, what's going on?

The Horcrux jerks and spasms.

HARRY  
It must sense the sword nearby.  
It's trying to get away.

RON  
That's the sword of Gryffindor? You reckon this is the real one?

HARRY  
I know it is. Look at the Horcrux.

Ron tosses the Horcrux to Harry, who snatches it out of the air with ease. He holds his palm flat, the Horcrux practically jumps right out of his hand.

RON  
So how did the sword get in that pool?

HARRY  
Whoever cast the Patronus must have left it. How did you get here? Did you see anyone?

RON

Long story, mate. I thought I saw something move behind that tree, but I didn't stop. You'd gone under and hadn't come up - hey!

Harry sets off in the direction Ron has pointed in before Ron finishes speaking. Ron quickly hurries after him.

There are two oaks grown very close together with a narrow gap at eye level. The ground around the trees is free of snow, there are no signs of footprints.

HARRY

Nothing. Come here.

Harry leads the way to a small clearing in the trees where the moonlight shines brightly on the fallen snow.

Harry stops and turns to speak to Ron, but stops. Ron is holding the sword in his hands like an offering, staring oddly at it.

RON

It's time, Harry. You should do it now.

He brushes the snow from the surface of a flat rock at the center of the clearing.

HARRY

Ron?

RON

This is it, Harry. It's time. Even the Horcrux knows it.

HARRY

Right. I'm going to open it and you stab it. Straightaway, okay? Because whatever's in there will put up a fight. The bit of Riddle in the diary tried to kill me.

RON

Me? What? Why?

HARRY

You got it out of the pool. I think it's supposed to be you.

RON

No! You should do it.

HARRY

It's meant to be you. I'll open it  
and you stab it.

Harry sets the Horcrux down on the flat rock and kneels to  
the side, holding it there.

RON

How are you going to open it?

HARRY

I'm going to ask it, in  
Parseltongue.

Harry leans closer to the Horcrux and begins to hiss.

RON

No! No, don't open it! I can't,  
Harry, I'm serious! You do it -

HARRY

But why? Let's just get rid of it -

RON

Because that thing's bad for me! I  
can't handle it. It affects me  
worse than it affected you and  
Hermione. It's too strong.

HARRY

You can do it! You have to! On  
three... one. Two. Three... *open*.

The last word comes out as a HISS.

The golden doors of the locket swing open with a little  
CLICK.

HARRY (CONT'D)

Stab!

Ron raises the sword over his head with shaking arms. Harry  
grips each end of the locket tightly and braces himself.

A voice hisses from the open Horcrux.

VOLDEMORT (V.O.)

I have seen your heart, and it is  
mine.

With a great WHOOSH, the trees around them shake and sway as  
if caught in a hurricane. Harry is forced away from the  
Horcrux with great force.

He is pushed backward in the snow on his back until he is forced against the closest tree held there as if by invisible hands.

The force is so great, Harry starts to lose consciousness. He fights to keep his head up and his eyes open. He can barely utter a word.

Ron, transfixed in horror, still holds the sword aloft over his head, but he is immobile, staring at the Horcrux.

The windows of the locket blink like living eyes, red gleaming out in slits.

HARRY

Stab it!

VOLDEMORT (V.O.)

Least loved, always, by the mother  
who craved a daughter... Least  
loved, now, by the girl who prefers  
your friend... Second best, always,  
eternally overshadowed...

Out of the locket's two windows, blossom two phatasmal shapes. As they grow in size, they take on the appearance of Hermione and Harry. The only difference from the real things are the vivid, gleaming red eyes.

Ron YELLS in shock and backs away from the figures, dropping the sword to his side.

He stumbles back as far away as possible until his back hits a tree.

PHATASM HARRY

Why return? We were better without  
you, happier without you, glad of  
your absence... We laughed at your  
stupidity, your cowardice, your  
presumption -

PHATASM HERMIONE

Presumption! Who could look at you,  
who would ever look at you, beside  
Harry Potter? What have you ever  
done, compared with the Chosen One?  
What are you, compared with the Boy  
Who Lived?

PHATASM HARRY

Your mother confessed that she  
would have preferred me as a son,  
would be glad to exchange...

PHATASM HERMIONE

Who wouldn't prefer him, what woman  
would take you, you are nothing,  
nothing, nothing compared to him.

The Phatasm Hermione wraps herself around Harry, both sealing themselves in a close embrace. Their lips meet passionately.

Ron drops the sword to the ground. His eyes flash an angry red.

With a primal CRY, he drops to his knees and drops his head in his hands. In one sudden movement, he is back on his feet, sword raised above his head.

He rushes to the two figures, now pleading for their lives as his friends.

He strikes the Horcrux dead center on the rock surface. There is a great CRASH that sends him flying backward.

With a GASP, Harry blinks away the unconsciousness and sits up, looking around.

At the center of the clearing, where the rock was, there is now a scorched crater. The two pieces of the locket lie on opposite sides of the crater.

Further from him, Ron lies on his side facing away from Harry, his heavy breathing heard in the eerie silence. The sword of Gryffindor lies in the snow at his back.

Harry stands and reaches out for one piece of the locket. It's is burning hot. He drops it in the snow.

HARRY

Ron?

RON

(voice raw)

I'm sorry. I'm sorry I left. I know  
I was a - a -

HARRY

You've sort of made up for it  
tonight. Getting the sword.  
Finishing off the Horcrux. Saving  
my life.

Ron lumbers to his feet. When he turns to face Harry, his eyes are bloodshot, but his tears have dried.

RON

That makes me sound a lot cooler than I was.

HARRY

Stuff like that always sounds cooler than it really was. I've been trying to tell you that for years.

Simultaneously, they walk forward and hug, pounding on each other's back.

HARRY (CONT'D)

(breaking away)

And now all we've got to do is find the tent again.

INT. TENT

Hermione paces frantically in front of the fire, running her hands through her hair.

HERMIONE

(muttering)

I'll kill him. He better be okay. If he's not okay, I'm going to kill him.

The seam of the flap glows brightly before the flap falls open. Harry steps in with a gigantic smile on his face.

She rushes forward to embrace him. He turns her so her back is to the flap.

HERMIONE (CONT'D)

Where have you been?! You can't just leave! Are you all right?

She lays a hand on the side of his face as if to check for herself.

Ron stands hesitantly by the door, grimacing at the closeness he sees.

HARRY

It's okay, everything's fine. More than fine actually. I'm great. And there's someone here.

HERMIONE

What do you mean? Who - ?

She sees Ron and stops short.

Ron offers a meek half-smile.

With a GROWL, Hermione launches herself at Ron. Aims kicks and punches at anywhere she can reach.

RON

Ouch - ow - gerroff! What the - ?  
Hermione - OW!

HERMIONE

You crawl back here after weeks and weeks - How could you?

Each of her words is punctuated by a strike.

HARRY

Hermione! Calm -

He tries to grab her but she's flailing so much, he gets hit in the head, knocking his glasses off and drops her.

HERMIONE

I will not calm down! Give me back my wand! Give it back to me!

She turns to Harry to retrieve her wand. He backs away from her.

HERMIONE (CONT'D)

Don't you tell me what to do, Harry Potter! Don't you dare! Give it back to me now! And YOU!

She points at Ron, her look so fierce he backs up a few steps.

HERMIONE (CONT'D)

I came running after you! I called you! I begged you to come back!

RON

I know, Hermione, I'm sorry, I'm really -

HERMIONE

You're sorry?!

She attacks anew, having abandoned the attempt to get her wand back from Harry.

Harry steps in and catches her about the waist, lifting her up and pulling her away from Ron. She kicks out one last time, catching Ron on the shoulder.

HERMIONE (CONT'D)

You come back after all this time and you think it's all going to be all right if you just say sorry?

RON

What else can I say?

HERMIONE

Oh, I don't know! Rack your brains, Ron, that should only take a couple of seconds!

HARRY

He just saved -

HERMIONE

I don't care! I don't care what he's done! It doesn't change what he did! We could have been dead for all he knew!

RON

I knew you weren't dead! Harry's all over the news, I'd have heard straight off if you were dead, you don't know what it's been like -

HERMIONE

What it's been like for you?

She makes a move to get past Harry. He quickly uses her wand to erect a shield separating himself and Hermione from Ron.

She looks at him, furious.

HARRY

Hermione, please. He just saved my life. Let's talk about this more tomorrow, yeah? We're all exhausted and need some sleep.

HERMIONE

Fine. I suppose he can stay... until he throws another tantrum and takes off.

She storms off to the other side of the tent, back to her cot.

HARRY

About the best you could hope for,  
I think.

RON

Yeah. Could've been worse. Remember  
those birds she sent after me in  
6th Y-

A book connects with Ron's head cutting off his words. Harry spins around to look at Hermione, who is still off screen.

HARRY

How come you never tried out for  
Quidditch!?

Ron staggers to his feet, but falls over again.