

“Well met, Heir Weasley,” Harry responded automatically. “Who has the seats now?”

“Dad, but he tends to just give his voting power to Dumbledore. Politics confuse him,” Charlie said, grimacing. “It’s one of the reasons Bill and I are thinking about coming home, properly. We want to take our seats; you’re not the only one who’s getting a little suspicious about the way Dumbledore runs things. After this, I definitely don’t want him using my family votes any longer than he has to. We haven’t spoken to Dad about it yet,” he added, “but we were going to soon. I’ll talk to Bill about what you’ve told me — if that’s alright with you — and if he’s got any ideas for how to help, he’ll get in touch.”

“Yeah, I was hoping you’d tell him,” Harry agreed. “I wanted to, but I can’t exactly trust it all in a letter.” It was a weight off his shoulders knowing he had two more people on his side. “I’m going to tell the twins, too. Unless you think I shouldn’t?”

“They’ll be good allies, and they’re definitely not on Dumbledore’s side,” Charlie assured him. He glanced back at the dragons, which were beginning to get rowdy again. “Look, Harry, I should get back to work. But you’ve given me a hell of a lot to think about. I’ll talk to Bill, and we’ll be in touch.” He placed a hand on Harry’s shoulder. “You sure you don’t need any help with the task tomorrow?”

“No, I’ve got it, but thanks.” Harry hesitated for a second, but it was long enough for Charlie to pick up on it, and the redhead pulled him into another hug.

“Good luck tomorrow, Harry. I’ll be cheering you on.” Charlie grinned, cheeks dimpling. Harry wondered if he’d been a bit hasty in telling George he didn’t fancy any of his brothers.

Charlie dropped the privacy wards and strolled back out into the clearing as if he’d never been gone, and Harry watched the dragons for a few minutes more before hurrying back up to the castle.

Two more players on the board.

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At dinner that night, a scrap of parchment found its way onto Harry’s plate, and he grabbed it before anyone but Neville could see. *Transfiguration room. Curfew.* The handwriting was familiar. He glanced across at the Slytherin table, and nodded.

“Is it him?” Neville asked under his breath. Harry hummed quietly in confirmation, burning the note with the tip of his wand.

Since Neville was in the know and very few other people were actively talking to him, it was easy for Harry to disappear right before curfew, keeping the map in hand as he crept through the corridors under the invisibility cloak. Moody was in his office, and Harry hoped it stayed that way.

He arrived first, but didn’t have to wait long for Draco. The blond hadn’t bothered bringing cards this time. He looked anxious.