

did tease him for caring too much about his hair sometimes.

“We won’t tell anyone,” Hermione insisted.

“There’s nothing to tell,” Harry returned. “I don’t have a girlfriend. It’s none of your business where I go at night.”

Hermione drew back, glancing into her lap. Harry wondered if he’d overstepped. “No,” she said eventually. “No, I don’t suppose we’re back to there, yet.”

Harry sighed, unsure what to say to her. There were so many landmines in their friendship these days, it was hard to say if it was worth trying to fix.

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With only two days left of the term, Harry thought he’d be done having to avoid Professor Moody. The man was constantly trying to get him alone, to talk to him about the tournament, or classwork. There was something about him that made Harry’s skin crawl, but he was running out of reasons to leave his presence without coming off as outright rude. He didn’t want to get a detention over it; then he definitely wouldn’t be able to avoid being alone with Moody. He was honestly surprised the man hadn’t resorted to that yet.

If it got any worse, Harry was going to have to start keeping the map out at all times just to avoid the man. The only reason he didn’t already was because he didn’t want that magical eye catching sight of it. Dumbledore didn’t know about the Marauder’s Map, and Harry definitely wanted to keep it that way. At least the castle seemed to be on his side; staircases changing right when he needed them to, passageways that he was pretty sure hadn’t existed five minutes before he needed them. Hogwarts was definitely trying to look after the Slytherin heir.

Hearing the familiar thunk-thunk of the man’s wooden leg on the tile, Harry ducked into a passageway behind a false wall, cursing under his breath. The man was determined, he’d give him that!

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At last, classes were over. Annoyingly, Snape was one of the only teachers who hadn’t given up trying to actually teach the distracted students, setting a quiz on antidotes for the very last lesson. Harry had spent his whole detention after the Wand Weighing catching up on antidotes privately with Snape, though, so it was easy enough. He hurried out of the dungeons as soon as Snape dismissed them, wanting to get an order out to Flourish and Blotts before they closed for the weekend, having had the perfect idea for Remus’ Christmas present. He hoped Hedwig was back from wherever the twins had sent her.

When he eventually got to the common room, after a detour to the kitchens for food — where apparently both Dobby and Winky had been hired? Who knew — he entered only to find Ron sat in a chair looking like he was about to be sick, Ginny hovering over him. The youngest Weasley seemed to be trying really hard not to laugh.