

world couldn't be brought forward with Albus Dumbledore holding it back. "I just don't know if I can trust all of them."

"Well, no one's said anything about you being an heir yet," Neville pointed out. "None of them trust Dumbledore. I think they'd be willing to listen to you, if you wanted to tell them. They're good people."

Harry realised that Neville must have known most of them for far longer than Hogwarts; they probably played together as children. Grew up together. If Neville said they were trustworthy, he believed him. "Oh, and there's one more thing," he added, bracing himself for perhaps the most volatile secret of all. Neville's brows drew together warily. "Y'know last year I said Draco Malfoy wasn't as bad as we thought he was? I'm sort of— friends with him, now?" In all his story he hadn't said a word about Draco, but it didn't seem fair to be trusting Neville with so much but not that.

Neville stared at him. "That's it, right? No more secrets after that?" he checked. Harry ran over things in his mind.

"No, no, don't think so. That's the last one." Well, there was the slight maybe-crush he'd developed on the blond Slytherin, but Neville didn't need to know about that. He'd warm him up to the idea of Draco being his friend first.

"Okay," Neville said eventually. "If you're friends with him, he can't be as bad as he seems."

"Really? Just like that?" Harry had expected some sort of argument, at least. Neville shrugged.

"I thought Cassius was kind of a prat before I started talking to him, but he's actually alright. Even if he is crap at Herbology. If you say Malfoy's not a prat, then I believe you."

"Oh, no, he's definitely still a prat," Harry assured with a laugh. "But... a good one?" He felt his cheeks turning red, and hoped Neville didn't notice.

"Well, you're a bit of a prat sometimes, too, so I s'pose it all balances out," Neville said with a teasing grin. Harry made a noise of offence. "You went after a basilisk, *knowing it was a basilisk*, with nothing but your wand at the age of twelve! You spent all of last year wandering about at night when there was a murderer out there who wanted to *kill you*!" Neville pointed out. "Hell, you followed Quirrell down to the Philosopher's stone in first year without a second of hesitation!"

Harry was beginning to regret having told Neville the truth about his first two years at Hogwarts over the summer. "Okay, yeah, but in my defence I was under a Compulsion charm for the first two years," he pointed out.

"And what's your excuse for last year?" Neville asked, lips curled up at the edges. Harry sighed, running a hand through his hair.

"I'm a prat?" he admitted eventually, shrugging apologetically. "I don't know what you want me to say, Nev — we both know I'd be lying if I said I won't do it again."