

“You’re trying to blame this on me!” Harry yelled, furious. “She’s the one who drugged the chocolates in the first place!”

“Feelings can make people do silly things; especially young ladies of Miss Vane’s age,” Dumbledore replied, shaking his head.

“Albus, you cannot be serious!” McGonagall argued. “Potter had nothing to do with this. He was unaware there was anything wrong with the chocolates. And I certainly expect *young ladies of Miss Vane’s age* to have better sense than to use illegal love potions under my very nose! Not to mention stealing from a professor! You’ll be lucky not to be expelled for this. You’ll be lucky if no one presses charges!”

Romilda burst into louder tears.

“Now, now, that’s a little bit drastic,” Dumbledore was fumbling, now, and they could all see it. He looked up, realising for the first time that the entire hall was staring at him in disgust, that he would so easily try and dismiss what was essentially attempted rape. “Why don’t we all take this up to my office, get everything straightened out?”

“I’m not going anywhere with you, or *her*,” Harry declared, glaring at Romilda. “And I really think someone should take Ron to the Hospital Wing.”

“Right you are, Potter. Miss Weasley, take your brother up to Madam Pomfrey, will you?” McGonagall instructed, and Ginny nodded, pale behind her freckles as she grabbed Ron by the arm. He was reluctant to leave, calling Romilda’s name — eventually Ginny had to resort to Stunning him, levitating him from the hall.

“Mr Potter, will you be pressing charges?” McGonagall asked plainly. Harry grit his teeth.

“Not this time. But I will if she tries anything again.” He would give her the benefit of the doubt, assume she didn’t know what Amortentia was truly like, how helpless it would have left Harry. McGonagall gave a curt nod, and gripped Romilda hard by the shoulder, frog-marching her out of the hall. No one else moved.

“The rest of you, off to class!” the Scottish woman barked in the doorway. “My seventh year class, take a free period. Go, you’re all running late!”

As soon as she disappeared, there was a scramble of activity, everyone hurrying to shovel down as much of the breakfast they’d abandoned before they had to go. Harry didn’t realise he was shaking until Neville eased him down to sit on the bench, and Parvati and Lavender appeared at his side.

“Are you alright, Harry?” Lavender asked, voice trembling. He nodded jerkily.

“Potter.” He looked up to see Professor Babbling, frowning down at him in concern. “Don’t worry about making it to class. Missing one period won’t kill you, and I daresay your mind would be elsewhere regardless.” Her frown deepened, and she patted him on the shoulder. “I’ll give your homework back to Mr Malfoy to pass on to you.”