

Neville laughed, shaking his head. "As long as you're aware of your faults," he said magnanimously. He glanced at Harry in consideration. "I take it Ron and Hermione don't know about any of this?"

"They know Sirius is innocent. They were there for that bit," Harry told him. "But they don't know about Seren Du, or about Dumbledore. Or Draco. I, uh, wasn't planning on telling them. Not until I can be sure."

"If Ron's mum is on Dumbledore's side, they might be as well," Neville realised softly. Harry nodded.

"I always thought it was a bit weird how right as I got to the platform, a wizarding family appears and just starts talking really loudly about muggles," he admitted. It all felt a little *too* coincidental, the way the Weasleys had been there to help him, and Ron had been the first friend he met on the train. Even with Hermione and the troll, though he knew Quirrell had been the one to let it into the school, how had she been the only one in danger? He didn't like to believe it, but now he knew how manipulative Dumbledore could be, he wouldn't put it past the man. Ron and Hermione were the perfect best friends to keep him oblivious. To keep him in check.

"You deserve better than Ron, anyway," Neville said with a huff. "He's always been jealous of you. You don't even realise when you're holding yourself back for his sake. Like all those new clothes you got that you hardly ever wear. Your trunk's full of them, but you're still in the same five shirts that are way too big."

"You really have been paying attention, haven't you?" Harry mused, watching Neville blush bashfully. "Do you know how Hermione's taking the whole champion thing, by the way?" Harry hadn't seen her since the Halloween feast.

"She was telling a couple of third years last night that you didn't put your name in by yourself," Neville told him. "But she's not stupid, of course she can see that. That..."

"That doesn't mean she isn't one of Dumbledore's," Harry finished for him. He sighed, looking out across the lake. "I guess I'll stick with it and see. Ron's not talking to me, which is fine, but if I start pushing her away I'll let Dumbledore in on my plans a little earlier than expected. Besides, maybe she's trustworthy. I don't know yet."

"Maybe," Neville agreed.

Harry knew they had to go back inside, he had to face the crowd eventually. But his head was spinning with all the information he'd given Neville, all the new information he'd gained from that.

So much for a quiet, normal year.