

Even with the excitement about the Goblet of Fire, Harry was still up early enough that only a handful of people were milling around the Great Hall. He could get used to this; it was nice having breakfast in the quiet. He watched Cassius and a couple of other Slytherins toss their names into the flames, and smirked. Imagine if the Hogwarts champion was a Slytherin?

As things got a little busier, Harry finished off his porridge and left the hall, right as the Durmstrang delegation entered. Each of them had a piece of parchment in their hands. Harry lingered in the doorway to watch them throw their names in one by one, then slipped out of the castle and towards the lake, wrapping his cloak snugly around himself. He found a quiet little nook beside a tree near the bank, setting up his usual privacy charms before taking the mirror from his pocket and speaking Sirius' name. After a few beats, his godfather's face appeared.

"You're up early," Sirius greeted. Harry offered a half-smile.

"So are you," he pointed out. "It's one of those days."

Sirius met his gaze knowingly. "It is, isn't it," he agreed. "How are things at school? The champions are being announced tonight, correct?"

Harry told Sirius everything that had happened since he'd spoke to the man a few days ago, including his little moment with Karkaroff. The mere mention of the man made Sirius scowl. "Stay away from him if you can, Harry," he warned. "He's no good."

Harry had surmised that much for himself. "How are things at home? What are you up to today?"

"Just spending time with Moony. Gonna light a Samhain fire later. Today is... hard, for both of us." Neither of them needed to say why. The death of Lily and James Potter hung over all of them, the wound still achingly fresh after thirteen years.

"I wish I could be there with you," Harry sighed. He hated having to spend Halloween at school. Everyone was too cheerful, and something *always* went wrong.

"We do too, pup. Make sure someone gives you a hug today, yeah? For me. I'd tell you to go to Severus for one, but I think he might explode if you asked," Sirius joked, making Harry grin.

"Okay. You give Moony an extra hug for me, won't you? For both your sakes." One day they'd all be able to spend the day together, mourning properly. Probably not until after Harry graduated Hogwarts, but... it was a nice thought.

He chatted to Sirius about inconsequential things for a while, basking in the warm feeling he got from having an adult who actually cared about the little things in his life. Not just wanting to talk to him when he was in trouble, or in danger, or they needed something from him — one of the few adults in Harry's life who actually *cared* about him. Not the Boy-Who-Lived.