

“So... if you don't mind us asking... what really happened last night?” George's question was tentative. “If you're not ready to tell us, that's fine,” he added hastily.

“No, no, I can.” Telling the other champions had been slightly easier than telling Dumbledore. Maybe it would get better the more times he said it; sink in a little deeper, so he could actually believe it had happened. So it wasn't all some awful nightmare.

Unlike with the champions, this time Harry tried not to leave anything out. Ginny buried her face in Neville's shoulder when he described watching Wormtail put the twisted baby in the cauldron and see it emerge as Voldemort. Even the twins were pale and grim-faced when he described the way their wands had connected, and he'd used the distraction to run.

“Bloody hell,” George said in the end. “So that's it, then. He's really back.”

“He's really back,” Harry confirmed dully. “And he's got most of his followers with him.”

“So what's the plan now?” Fred asked without hesitation. Harry blinked at him. “Mate, you're gonna be in the thick of it whether you like it or not, and if you think we're gonna stand by and watch you risk your neck, you've got another thing coming.”

“He's right. Whatever you're doing, we want to help,” Ginny said vehemently. “And if you tell me I'm too young I'll hex you.”

“Hell, we're all too young for this,” Harry pointed out with a wry quirk of his lips. “I... thanks, guys. We don't really have a plan yet. Need to talk to some people first. But once I know what's happening, I'll let you know.”

“Whatever we can do to help, let us know,” Neville said. “Gran, too. She doesn't think much of Dumbledore, but she's on your side.”

When Harry thought about all the people he'd have to talk to, all the decisions he'd have to make in the next few weeks, it made his chest tighten uncomfortably. He pushed it away. There was time for all that later.

Ginny cleared her throat, drawing their attention. “What... what about Ron and Hermione?” At Harry's raised eyebrow, she continued. “They were up here last night too. They know some of what happened. But I'm not blind; you clearly don't trust them anymore. What are we supposed to tell them, if they ask?”

“I've got pretty good evidence that Ron and Hermione are spying on me for Dumbledore,” Harry admitted, hating the words even as he said them. “If they ask, play dumb, act like you don't know any more than they do. And be careful; if they're watching me, they might be watching you as well.”

Ginny nodded, showing no sign of sadness or disappointment that her brother was doing such a thing. Harry wondered if the twins had told her about their mother, yet.

Harry yawned, and Ginny immediately nudged him back into bed. “You should get some more sleep. We'll leave you to it. You'll be out for dinner, yeah?”