

the centre.

“How does Master Harry like his tea?” She was already making up three other cups, and Harry blinked.

“Uh, bit of milk, one sugar, thanks.” Ceri floated a teacup in his direction, then bowed and disappeared.

“What happened last summer, pup?” Sirius asked, dark brows knitted together in worry. Harry took a deep breath.

“Well, I suppose I should give you a bit of backstory, first. You know I live — lived — with the Dursleys. Well, Uncle Vernon has this sister...” Harry gave them a brief run-down of the joys of Aunt Marge, and a summary of what she’d said about his parents; something that had Sirius growling like his canine counterpart, and even Remus baring his teeth.

“So I ended up living in Diagon Alley for the last couple weeks of summer. And at one point, I went to Gringotts to get money from my vault, only I didn’t have my key, so the goblins scanned my magic. And...” Here he swallowed thickly. Sirius’ hand rested on his knee, squeezing in support. Slowly, Harry revealed what the goblins had discovered — all of it. He told them all four houses he was inheriting, and their suspicions about who cast the magic, and the consequences Gorrak had heavily implied would come of him turning seventeen with the block still active.

By the end of his tale, Sirius was pacing the length of the living room in white-knuckled fury. “That manipulative, lying, no-good, scheming,” he muttered under his breath. Some of the knickknacks on the shelves began to rattle.

“Sirius, control yourself,” Remus called in a firm voice. “I’m as angry as you are, but blowing up the crockery won’t help anything.” Sirius seemed to realise his magic was getting away from him, and his shoulders slumped, a long breath escaping him.

“I knew Dumbledore was ruthless in the face of the Greater Good, but I didn’t realise he would go to such lengths on a child,” Snape murmured. “Mr Potter, might you permit me to do a scan of my own? I have no doubt the goblins were entirely thorough, but there are certain spells their particular brand of magic will not catch.”

Harry went wide-eyed in horror at the thought of having more of Dumbledore’s magic on him. “Please,” he agreed, nodding frantically. Snape stood, waving his wand and murmuring something under his breath. Harry’s chest glowed blue for a second, then red, then black. “What does that mean?”

“A Tracking spell. A passive one — he can only find you if he checks the spell, rather than knowing exactly where you are at all times. Also a minor Suggestibility charm, and a Truth-Telling charm. The combination would encourage you to spill secrets to the headmaster you might have preferred to keep to yourself. Not in a way you’d notice, but rather to make you feel like you can trust him. Though they’re weak enough that I’d imagine you’ve been able to ignore them since you learned the truth.” Snape looked disgusted all the same, and Harry mirrored his expression.