

assure him he was okay. The Slytherin seemed convinced his father was at least partly to blame.

“Not yet. It’s likely we never will, with the investigation being closed up. Kingsley said you asked for your aunt and uncle to be left unaware.” There was curiosity in his tone. Harry grimaced.

“If they knew it was magic-related, they’d blame me. I can’t risk them thinking that... especially if I have to stay here until Dumbledore sends someone to get me.”

Remus’ eyes flashed gold for a moment. “I won’t let them hurt you ever again,” he vowed fiercely. Harry’s jaw clenched, but he stayed silent. He didn’t want to have that conversation — not now, preferably not ever. “The good news is, Dumbledore has decided to have the Order retrieve you during your cousin’s funeral. A few people seemed quite surprised and upset that you wouldn’t be able to go and say your goodbyes, but he insisted it was the safest time to extract you.”

“I wouldn’t be welcome there anyway,” Harry pointed out ruefully. He wasn’t sure if he’d want to go even if he could. “Funerals take a while though, right?” He’d never been to one, wizarding or muggle. Cedric’s funeral was too small. It had been almost two weeks after his death, though — Harry wasn’t sure he could last that long at Privet Drive.

“It’s on Thursday. I suppose your aunt and uncle wanted to get things done quickly,” Remus told him. “They’ll be sending someone to collect you on Thursday at two.”

“Can I come home?” Harry blurted, unable to help himself. “The Dursleys don’t know I’m here. If I’ve got a few days... the Order won’t find out, right, if I’m not here? The guard hasn’t changed?”

“No, the guard is still the same. Dumbledore thinks it unlikely that a second attack will come so soon after the first, if at all.”

“Then can I come home? Please?” He hated how his voice cracked. “I don’t want to stay here by myself, not even until Thursday.”

Remus sighed, pulling him closer again. “Oh, cub.” He nosed Harry’s temple wolfishly. “Of course. Of course you can come home, love.”

Harry practically melted in relief.

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Unlike last summer, when Harry had been determined to fit as much fun and freedom as possible into his last days at Seren Du, he was subdued in the few days before Dudley’s funeral. The whole household was — even though Harry hadn’t been anywhere near the attack, the knowledge of how close he *could’ve* been weighed heavily on all of them.

Harry made sure to tie up all his loose ends, writing letters to all those he’d no longer be able to talk to until school started up again. He promised Susan he’d keep going through the laws