

Chapter 54

Chapter Notes

The boys are getting bolder ;) And things are starting to get a little more interesting~

October had arrived by the time the contract was ready to be signed. Miraculously, Harry managed to stay entirely detention-free for the whole two weeks — Umbridge had seemingly gotten bored of trying to provoke him in class, instead letting them sit and mindlessly read a chapter at a time of Slinkhard's book. All of them wondered what she would do when they ran out of chapters.

Hedwig had made a full recovery, and Harry was now sending his letters to Grimmauld Place by Ceri, who would pass them on to Remus. The others seemed confused at first, but after a quick lie about Harry befriending a Hogwarts house elf — entirely believable, after the Dobby situation — they quickly accepted this new, more secure form of communication. Not that they had much of importance to talk about; Bill and his team were still working on the horcrux situation, and he and Charlie were quietly preparing to take over their family seats, but no one wanted to make any drastic moves with Umbridge so firmly ensconced in Hogwarts. They were wary of causing Fudge to have a complete breakdown and do something he couldn't take back.

Still, it was nice to hear about the more mundane things; Bill and Fleur's relationship, Charlie's dragons. He was getting to know Tonks better, too, through letters. She had a similar sort of humour to Sirius, though the Hufflepuff in her definitely shone through. She was dating someone as well, but Harry had yet to figure it out, and Tonks was taking far too much joy in keeping it secret.

His letter from Viktor returned, not on the school owl, but on the razor-clawed hunting falcon that was the Bulgarian's personal mail carrier. He mentioned having heard from Fleur that Harry had mail difficulties, and promised his falcon would not let anyone steal his burden. Looking at the bird's wickedly sharp beak, Harry almost hoped Umbridge would try.

Still, though school seemed to be business as usual — Umbridge's attempts at control aside — word spread very discreetly around certain people, and on the first Hogsmeade weekend of the year, Harry was up early and sneaking across the dew-soaked grass to a clearing just inside the tree-line of the Forbidden Forest, where Hagrid used to teach lessons that required a bit of tree coverage. He was under his invisibility cloak, with Neville pressed close behind him.

Harry could have called everyone to gather at the Room of Requirement, but he didn't want to reveal the secret of the room until everyone had signed the contract. So, after a little brainstorming with his friends, the forest had been decided as their best bet for a meeting.