

He should have known he couldn't successfully avoid Ron and Hermione forever. They ambushed him while he was in the library, doing his Christmas homework, having just sent a letter off to Susan with Hedwig. She was his best bet for finding out if he'd missed anything important in the last couple days of school, and he wanted to know how her aunt was doing with the Dumbledore case.

The pair walked right up to him, and Harry set his quill down, dread building. What did they want now? Was Ron still mad about the snake thing?

"So are you done being mad at us, yet?" Ron asked. Harry blinked.

"Sorry, what?"

"You've been awful to us since the summer," Hermione burst out. "I *know* it upset you that we didn't write to you, but Dumbledore told us not to say anything about the Order or where we were."

"Even if we had written to you it would've just pissed off your relatives," Ron added mulishly. "You can't be angry at us for that, mate."

"I know you had a bad summer, and we're really sorry, but honestly, Harry, you've been ignoring us all term and it's just not fair! We might have made mistakes, but we don't deserve the cold shoulder from you." Hermione spoke very quickly, like she'd rehearsed what she was going to say and wanted to get it all out before she was interrupted.

Harry stared at them both incredulously. *What??*

"I'm not ignoring you because you didn't write to me over the summer," he said flatly. They both looked taken-aback. "I'm ignoring you because I don't want to be friends with you anymore."

Ron's face went red with anger. "You just *decided* that, did you?" he snarled. "What, you're too good for us now?"

"*You* made it pretty clear how little our friendship meant when you decided to believe I'd put my own name in the Goblet of Fire, and spend half the year talking shit about me behind my back because of it!" Harry retorted sharply.

"Harry, he apologised for that," Hermione huffed, but Harry just rolled his eyes.

"Because you made him. And it didn't stop him saying things when he thought I wouldn't hear them." With Lavender and Parvati as his friends, Harry had heard every awful thing Ron had said about him. There was no way the redhead could come back from that, even if he wasn't spying for Dumbledore.

"But what about all the things we've gone through?" Hermione was tearful now. "The troll, and the stone, and everything with the Heir of Slytherin! Third year when you thought Sirius was trying to kill you. The Triwizard Tournament!"