

“This has gone on long enough,” she started. For a second, Harry thought she was going to confess to being a spy for Dumbledore. “I know the two of you have had... issues, this year, but really, you’ve been friends for far too long to let this silly tournament get in the way of that.” Harry bit back a snort; if only it was just the tournament. “It’s awful having the two of you fighting, and Harry I know I’ve been a bit short with you lately, and I apologise for that, but it’s been hard, alright? I hate it, and I wish you two would just get over this and be friends again. Ronald, Harry very clearly did not put his name in the Goblet, and he needs your support, not your derision. Harry, you can’t blame Ron for being a bit jealous sometimes; these things happen, and you shouldn’t begrudge him his feelings.”

Harry absolutely would begrudge him his feelings when those feelings made him be an asshole, but he kept his mouth shut. He had never been able to stand up to Hermione when she brought out her sad voice, and maybe he had been a little hard on both of them lately. He was so worried about Dumbledore, he was seeing enemies everywhere, even in the two people who had been his best friends since he was eleven.

He wasn’t saying they could go back to that again. His friendship group had expanded far too much for him to ever be happy with that insular little trio again. But maybe he could stop actively avoiding them, at least. That was probably a dick move on his part.

“Ron’s being very silent in all this,” he commented. Hermione shot the redhead a pointed glare. Ron looked like he was being forced to drink vinegar.

“I’m sorry I said what I said, about you putting your name in and everything,” he muttered. He didn’t sound particularly sorry. It was like watching a toddler being made to apologise by their mother. “I just... you get all this great stuff — you’re school champion, you might win a thousand galleons, and that’s on top of being Harry bloody Potter. And you don’t even *care*.”

“I don’t want to be school champion,” Harry retorted, trying not to get too angry with Ron while Hermione was sat there staring at him pleadingly. “I didn’t ask for any of this. I don’t know what I’d do with a thousand galleons. And mate, if you want a scar on your forehead, dead parents, and a target on your back, then by all means, go right ahead.”

Ron blanched. Hermione winced. “Harry,” she scolded. He shrugged, not remotely sorry.

“If he’s willing to stop being a dick then I’m willing to speak to him again. But it’ll take more than a half-hearted apology for me to actually forgive him.”

“Hear, hear!” It was the twins, perching on the arms of Harry’s chair with identical grins on their faces.

“You tell our prat brother, Harry. Look, can we borrow Hedwig for a bit?” George asked, ruffling Harry’s hair absently.

“Yeah, no problem. She’s been bored lately.” With all his friends at Hogwarts, and the mirror to talk to Sirius and Remus, he didn’t have much use for her save for the occasional letter to Mrs Frobisher, who was busy trying to get Skeeter banned from school grounds except for the tournament.