

Chapter 16

With the clock suddenly ticking down very rapidly to his departure, Harry was determined to make the most of Seren Du before he left. He had a bit of a panic at the start — so many things he wanted to do, and so little time left! — but he figured it out pretty quickly. He could fly at the Burrow, even if it wouldn't be on a proper half-pitch. The pool, the library, and the company were the things he would miss the most.

He also sent Artemis off with a round of letters for all the friends he couldn't send Hedwig to, explaining he was being moved to somewhere his mail would be monitored and he'd see them back at school. Luckily, that was only a couple of weeks away. He'd hate to be out of contact with Draco for much longer than that. Ever since the visit, Artemis had been run ragged flying back and forth between them.

The three adults had decided to wrap up Harry's lessons for the summer, since he'd be leaving soon anyway. Harry was actually a little sad about it. Currently, he was sat in Snape's potions lab, helping finish off a batch of Skele-Gro that would be going to the Hogwarts hospital wing ready for the new school term. "With that bloody tournament, we'll probably need plenty of it," Snape had muttered derisively.

Setting the potion aside to cool, Harry looked up at his professor cautiously. "That's all done, then?" Snape nodded.

"Once it's cooled, I'll bottle it and send it to the school." He checked some notes on a piece of parchment tacked to his desk; Pomfrey's order list, from what Harry could gather. "Now that I've seen you're a perfectly competent brewer, I'll expect your grades to improve in my class, Mr Potter."

Harry sent him a light glare. "I'm sure they would if my professor didn't hate me, and the Slytherins didn't sabotage me."

"From the looks of things, you've got half the Slytherins wrapped around your little finger," Snape retorted, making Harry blush. "And you are aware that I will have to keep up appearances. I shall endeavour not to harm your potions, and I will mark you as fairly as I can, but there are people on both sides watching me, Potter, and I must maintain a certain level of... spite in your direction."

"I expected as much," Harry said with a shrug. It really wouldn't be much different to previous years. He could handle it. "But, sir, before we reach that point... I just wanted to say thank you, for everything you've done for me over the summer. You didn't have to spend time teaching me. I'm well aware that you're here because Moony is, not for me or Sirius. I just—you didn't have to be nice to me, but you were. So, thanks," he finished awkwardly. Snape was silent for a minute.

"I daresay Remus would have been quite unimpressed with me had I treated you here as I treat you at school," he said eventually. "Nonetheless, I find that without certain... external influences, you are not a terrible student, Mr Potter. Still unfailingly Gryffindor, but that