

Chapter 103

Chapter Notes

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If Harry hadn't known better, he would not have realised Hogwarts was supposed to be a school, in the days that followed. The wedding seemed to be the last grasp of lightheartedness in the face of war — once that was out of the way, giving everyone the Sunday to bask in their happiness, it was all business.

Harry felt like a military general, organising training groups depending on ability — intermixing the HA with the adults, letting them learn from each other, making sure everyone was aware of the others' skill level. Now was not the time for a grown adult to get embarrassed by a fifteen year-old casting a better Shield charm than them, only the time to improve it before it really mattered.

He had Sirius and Remus around to help, making sure he took time to eat and sleep and get some time away from it all when he could. Draco helped, too, but he had his own matters to deal with, splitting his time between duelling with the rest and helping Madam Pomfrey prepare the Hospital Wing for all eventualities.

Every day, more and more people showed up — either for safe refuge from the war, or to lend their wands to the fight, People Harry had never met, people he wasn't sure he could even trust, but luckily the adults around him usually knew enough to get a good measure of them. The teachers especially; between McGonagall and Slughorn, they had memories of just about every British wixen of a certain magical ability for the last sixty years.

Of course, as had been proven many times over, looks could be deceiving. But they just didn't have the capacity to properly vet every single person who came to Hogwarts.

The guilt from expelling those six teenagers still hung heavy in McGonagall's shoulders. They didn't want to risk condemning people to Voldemort's clutches. And, quite frankly, they needed every capable wand they could get.

The only place Harry could truly be alone anymore was the Chamber of Secrets. He still had his training sessions with Snape down there — often with Draco joining them these days, both boys pushing themselves ever harder — but Salazar's office was a quiet, solitary retreat that he desperately needed by the latter half of July.

“What if he doesn't come?” he asked plaintively, stretched out on the sofa and staring up at the portrait of the founder. “Snape says he's recovered from the attack on the wards, but what if he decides it's not worth the risk and decides to lure me out instead?” It was all well and good preparing for a fight at Hogwarts, but Voldemort may not want to meet them on their terms.

“Then you beat him to it and lure him here,” Salazar said immediately. “Honestly, lad; you're a Slytherin, now act like one. There's ways to get a man like that to dance to your tune —