

Luckily at that minute, the hands moved from ‘work’ to ‘travelling’, and a pair of quiet pops heralded the arrival of the last two members of the family. Mr Weasley looked worn-out, greeting his wife with a kiss on the cheek and sinking wearily into his chair. “Merlin, what a week,” he sighed, shaking his head. “I’ll be glad when this all blows over. It would’ve done ages ago if Skeeter didn’t keep pushing those awful articles.”

“At least it’s getting people to take the search for Bertha Jorkins seriously,” Percy pointed out. “Mr Crouch has been saying for weeks that someone needed to look for her.” Behind his back, the twins fluttered their eyelashes and mock-swooned, mouthing ‘*Mr Crouch*’ over-dramatically. Harry sniggered into his stew.

“Crouch is very lucky Rita hasn’t found out about Winky,” Mr Weasley retorted irritably. “And is probably just hoping it stays that way.”

That set Hermione off about house elves, and Harry winced. He appreciated the sentiment, but she really needed to learn to research something properly before forming an opinion and mouthing off to anyone who would listen.

“Why don’t you all go up and finish packing,” Mrs Weasley cut in before Hermione could really get on her soapbox. “I put all your new school things in your rooms. Hermione, dear, I got that book you asked for. And I finished the laundry.”

“Thanks, Mrs Weasley,” Hermione said automatically, diverted from her tirade. For now.

Everyone of Hogwarts age trudged upstairs, and Harry heard rain thundering against the windows. “Sounds like we finished flying just in time,” he mused, heading up to Ron’s room. All the twins’ things were still in their room, which was housing Bill and Charlie for now. Except, of course, the bag full of Weasley’s Wizards Wheezes stashed in Harry’s trunk, just in case Mrs Weasley decided to do one last search.

Harry hadn’t really *unpacked* since arriving, so repacking his things didn’t take long once he’d ducked downstairs to go get his broom, trying not to eavesdrop on the conversation the adults were having in the kitchen. Sirius had told him to stay out of it and let the adults handle things, and he was going to try his best to follow that.

When he returned to Ron’s room, the redheaded boy was holding up what looked like a long maroon velvet dress, with mouldy-looking lace at the cuffs and collar. His face was a clear mask of disgust. “What the hell is this?”

Harry had a strong sense of foreboding as the answer popped into his mind. They all had dress robes on their school requirement list this year; Snape had said there was always some sort of formal event involved in the Triwizard Tournament. Harry had, with Remus’ help, chosen a set of dark green robes with gold accents. He actually thought he looked quite dashing in them.

Surely Mrs Weasley wasn’t expecting Ron to wear *that*?

The woman in question knocked on the door, entering with a pile of freshly laundered school robes draped over her arm. “Here you are, Ron, dear. Harry, are you absolutely sure you don’t