

Chapter 31

“Potter, stay where you are.” The sharp voice rang out through the Potions classroom, and Harry grimaced, shaking his head when Neville shot him a concerned look.

“I’ll catch up,” he assured, wondering what he was in trouble for this time. Perhaps, after having the weekend to think it over, Snape regretted being so nice to Harry. They’d had a pretty pleasant evening working together in his quarters, and he probably just wanted to make it clear he was still the evil, terrifying dungeon bat Harry had thought he was for the first three years of schooling.

When they were the only two left in the classroom, Snape locked the door and went through a series of privacy wards; he, too, was aware of Skeeter’s subterfuge. Harry stayed in his seat, waiting for the explosion.

“How often do you check the map?”

Harry blinked at the unexpected question. “I— what?”

“The Marauders’ blasted map,” Snape clarified. “How regularly have you been checking it?”

“At least three times a day, lately,” he said. “Looking for Rita Skeeter.” So far nothing unusual had come up, except for Mr Crouch being in the school sometimes. But he was probably just organising tournament stuff. “Why do you ask?”

Snape scowled. “Someone broke into my private stores recently.”

“Was it another champion looking for gillyweed, do you think?” Harry queried, wondering who would be stupid enough to steal from Snape.

“No; the only thing of note that was missing was boomslang skin.” His dark eyes turned pointed as comprehension dawned on Harry’s face. “You haven’t been brewing Polyjuice potion again, have you, Potter?”

“What? No!” Harry denied immediately. “What use would I have for Polyjuice? Wait, how do you know about the first time?”

“Miss Granger was indelicate in breaking into my stores, and left her magical signature all over the place,” Snape replied. “Don’t tell me what you used it for, I’m quite certain I don’t want to know. I assume it had something to do with Miss Granger being partially transformed into a cat.”

Harry snickered at the memory. “Yeah, bit of a mix-up there.” Snape gave him a despairing look. “I swear, sir, I don’t know anything about any Polyjuice being brewed. Couldn’t you tell who did it this time?”