

He didn't really have a choice. Someone had to end this cycle of war and death and misinformation. Someone had to put a stop to Dumbledore's quest for the Greater Good, before he brought the wizarding world to its knees.

He looked to the Slytherins during the feast, their drawn faces and solemn eyes. He hadn't had the chance to speak to Draco in the week since the task; all of them were being watched, now more than ever. He hoped Slytherin House knew they had options. He hoped they hadn't given up already.

The feast came to a quiet end, and Harry retreated up to the dorm with Neville. He hadn't spoken to Ron and Hermione since the night of the third task. They didn't seem to know what to say to him. Harry wasn't in any rush to speak to either of them; maybe if he was lucky, Dumbledore wouldn't see the need to have them spy on him, now that Voldemort was back.

Dean and Seamus had kept to themselves in the last week; Harry hadn't asked what they thought about Cedric, or Voldemort, or any of it. He was too scared of the answer. So they said nothing when Harry changed into pyjamas and sequestered himself away behind the drapes of his bed and his usual privacy charms. He was about to call it an early night, when the mirror began to vibrate beneath his pillow. He pulled it out, answering the call and smiling at Sirius' face.

"Hi, pup. Glad I managed to catch you. How was the feast?"

Harry's smile faltered, and he told Sirius what Dumbledore had said. His godfather didn't seem surprised either. "We suspected he might do as much. Setting himself up as the leader of the light again."

"What have you been doing? Where are you?" Harry hadn't managed to speak to his godfather since he'd left the Hospital Wing, the mirror going unanswered the few times Harry had been able to try it. Sirius grimaced.

"I'm in a place I never thought I'd have to go back to," he said, which gave Harry zero information whatsoever. "Moony and I have been gathering the old crowd — everyone who fought against Voldemort the first time around. And a few who weren't old enough the first time, but will happily join us for the second." There were voices in the background, and Sirius winced. "Listen, pup, I don't have long. There's a bit of a snag in our summer plan."

Dread rose in Harry's gut. "What do you mean?"

"Dumbledore wants you monitored this summer," Sirius told him. Harry cursed. "Yeah. He wants a 24/7 guard outside the Dursleys' house, ready to follow you any time you leave the property."

"I'm not staying with them all summer." If he was left to Uncle Vernon's hands after having Snape boss the man around the summer before, he wouldn't survive to see his fifth year.

"Absolutely not," Sirius agreed without hesitation, and something in Harry began to un-twist. "We haven't quite figured it out yet, but there's got to be a way to get you out of there without Dumbledore knowing."