

“Well it’s obvious the real story is you, and you’re not giving her anything! So she’s got to get her dirt elsewhere,” Hermione said diplomatically.

“The article she did about me was bad enough without me giving her more fuel for the fire!” Harry argued. “She writes nothing but rubbish, and I don’t need her dragging my name into her ridiculous lies. My reputation is bad enough as it is.”

“Since when have you cared about your reputation?” Hermione’s voice was sharp. “Surely, knowing what people think of you already, you should just let her write whatever she wants about you, to stop her writing awful things about anybody else. Clearly she’s not going to stop looking for a story from you, she’s just going to drag everyone else into the crossfire.”

“What, so I should just throw myself under the bus?” Harry spat back. “That’s easy for you to say, Hermione; you’re not the one whose face is in the paper every bloody five minutes. You’re not the one who has to deal with the public’s opinion every time you so much as breathe!” He forced himself to try and calm down; if their argument got much louder, Skeeter would hear him, and then she’d *really* have a story.

“But I was in the paper,” Hermione argued. “People think I’m your girlfriend now, because she started making up her own rubbish when *you* didn’t give her anything!”

“And I’m sorry about that, I really am,” Harry said earnestly. “But it isn’t my fault, and for all we know she would’ve written that crap anyway. Besides, no one really thinks you’re my girlfriend.”

Hermione went red at that. “*Some* people do,” she spat. “If you had any sort of consideration for others, you’d stop throwing a tantrum and just agree to an interview.”

Harry rather thought that only one of them was throwing a tantrum at the minute, and it certainly wasn’t him. Still, he merely shook his head, turning back towards the castle. It wasn’t worth the argument.

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Every time Harry opened that bloody golden egg, it just screamed at him. It was getting incredibly frustrating, both for him and the other residents of Gryffindor Tower. The only good thing to come of it was the improvement of Harry’s Silencing charm, once Seamus had threatened to throw both Harry and the egg out the dorm window if he didn’t stop opening it indoors.

“Does yours just screech the whole time?” Harry asked wearily, sliding onto the bench of the Hufflepuff table next to Cedric. They had only sat together a handful of times since the day after the champions had been announced, but Harry was somewhat starting to get used to it. Cho offered him a wave from Cedric’s other side.

“Yes,” Cedric groaned, running a hand through his hair. “It’s the worst, isn’t it? We even tried throwing it in the fire to see if that would do anything, but I think it just made it worse.”