

Thankfully, those who had overheard seemed much more intent on spreading word to as many of their friends as possible, than on pestering Harry for more details.

Harry saw Dumbledore enter the hall and make a bee-line straight for the Gryffindor table, and he tensed. “Hey, Nev, I’m gonna go for a wander,” he said in a low voice. “Avoid that conversation I *really* don’t want to have.” Hazel eyes flicked to Dumbledore, and Neville tilted his chin in assent. “Cover for me?”

“Yeah, no worries.”

Grinning in thanks, Harry stood up, grabbed an apple, and strode quickly in the opposite direction, heading for the points hourglasses. The Parseltongue passage was well-hidden there, and as it closed quickly behind him Harry cackled to himself, imagining Dumbledore stood in the hall wondering where the fuck Harry had gone.

Once again, he found himself sneaking through the passage to Snape’s office, though this time it was empty. That didn’t bother him; a quick check of the Map had him grinning, heading for the man’s personal quarters.

As the Map had revealed, Remus was there too, and Harry barrelled into the man in a tight hug.

“Oh, cub,” Remus murmured, stroking his hair. “I’m so proud of you. Padfoot is, too. You did brilliantly last night. I’ve been telling Severus all about it.”

Harry turned to the Potions Master, who nodded, a faint smile crossing his lips. “It seems you have been listening in our lessons. May wonders never cease.”

Harry snorted, recognising the compliment for what it was. “How is everyone else? What’s going on with the Order? Dumbledore said Tonks is in hospital.”

“She’s fine. A Compression curse caught her in the chest and broke a couple of ribs — punctured a lung — but they got her all healed up and with a few days rest she’ll be back on duty,” Remus relayed. “The rest of the injuries were minimal. Quite frankly, it was a walk in the park compared to the raid we’d just come from. Your lot took out half the opponents for us.” He ruffled Harry’s hair proudly, and the Gryffindor preened.

With hot chocolate delivered by Ceri, the three of them got comfortable in Snape’s sitting room, and Harry relayed the events of the night before the Order had shown up. Snape explained that Draco had come straight to him with the news as soon as Harry and the others had left, but once Umbridge began her rampage there was little he could do, so he retreated to the safety of his office.

“The students had it covered,” he said dismissively. “Any Slytherin that did not want to be involved had already been escorted to the common room. I decided to leave the rest to their own decisions.”

A round-about way of saying he supported the dissent in the only way he could.