

“But it worked! Look at us, we’re fine!” Harry gestured at his friends. “The Order is fine!” then he paused, “they are, aren’t they?”

“Nymphadora Tonks may need some time in St Mungo’s, but that is the worst of the damage,” Dumbledore confirmed, to Harry’s relief.

“See — we stopped the Death Eaters, prevented a Ministry coup, and stopped Voldemort from getting his hands on the Prophecy. I don’t think you can be mad at us for that, sir.”

Dumbledore clearly did not like this version of Harry that spoke back to him, though he was trying not to react outwardly in front of Pomfrey and the other students. “Be that as it may,” he said, a hint of frustration seeping in, “it was an enormous risk to take, and to expect your friends to take with you.”

“If I had seen another option, sir, I would have taken it,” Harry retorted evenly. “But I didn’t, and it’s done, and the only person who died is Lucius Malfoy, so I don’t really see that as a loss.”

Something flickered in Dumbledore’s eyes. “Death is always a loss, Harry.”

“Rather him than anyone I care about.”

“I’m sure the people who care about Lucius Malfoy would argue that. His son, perhaps.”

Harry didn’t know whether to laugh or curse the old man; he had *no idea* how Draco felt about his father. Harry would feel plenty of guilt over the situation, but that wouldn’t make him regret it, and he thought — he *hoped* — that Draco would agree.

“It has been a long and difficult evening,” Dumbledore said eventually. “I’m sure once you have had some rest, we can come back to this conversation with a more level head.” His tone was unbearably patronising, but at this point Harry was ready to take any end to the conversation with both hands.

“Great. I’m off to bed, then.”

“I’m sure Poppy would much prefer you spend the night with your friends here,” Dumbledore started, but Harry shook his head.

“Nope, I’m not injured, I’m not staying here.” He wanted to be properly reassured that his friends were alright, but that wasn’t going to happen with Dumbledore lurking around, and there was no way Harry was leaving himself so exposed by staying in the hospital wing overnight.

“Harry, please—“

“I’ll come see you guys in the morning,” Harry promised his friends, ignoring the headmaster.

“Tell Hannah to come visit in the morning, too, will you?” Susan requested. “She’ll be worried about me.”