

“I’m not stupid!” he argued. “All that talk about not wanting it, that was just to throw us off, wasn’t it? I guess even you can’t resist a thousand galleons of prize money.”

“Is that really what you think of me?” Harry asked. “That I’d put myself in this much danger for *money*? And lie about it?”

“Well what else am I supposed to think?” Ron retorted hotly.

“You’re supposed to *trust me*!” Harry grabbed his pyjamas, throwing them onto his mattress. “But there’s not been much of that, lately, has there? I’m going to bed.”

“Right, sure — got to get your beauty sleep,” Ron taunted. “Probably got a photo call in the morning, or something.”

Harry gave the redhead one last glare, then climbed onto bed and dragged his curtains shut forcefully, putting up his privacy wards. Safe in the silencing bubble, he let out a frustrated scream. Ron was infuriating!

Though, he supposed, he couldn’t exactly get at the boy for not trusting Harry. It wasn’t like Harry had done that in return, after all. Even if it was things like this that proved why.

Not bothering with his pyjamas just yet, Harry dug the two-way mirror out of his bag, leaning back against his headboard to talk to Sirius. When the man’s face appeared, the concern in those grey eyes made a lump rise in Harry’s throat. “Oh, pup,” he murmured softly, knowing. Harry swallowed back a sob. How had things gone wrong so quickly? “Pup, it’s okay,” Sirius soothed. “You’re going to be fine. I love you. It’s okay.”

Harry squeezed his eyes shut, taking a deep breath. He wished he could believe that.

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After Harry left, Severus and Remus sat in silence, staring into their mugs of tea. “Could it be Karkaroff?” Remus suggested. Severus shook his head.

“Too obvious. He’ll know he’s being watched.” Severus ran a hand through his hair, and Remus’ heart ached. His cub was in danger, and he just had to sit back and let it all happen!

“Are we sure this isn’t some plot of Dumbledore’s?” he asked doubtfully. The headmaster had proven he was happy to risk Harry’s safety in the past. “Some kind of test of Harry’s skills?”

“I don’t think he did it, but he’s certainly willing to sit back and let it happen,” Severus said. “He looked quite pleased about it, actually. Which is why I think it’s the Dark Lord’s doing — Dumbledore wants him to return before Harry is seventeen, that much is clear. If this is the first step towards that, he’s not going to stop it.”

Remus couldn’t stop the growl that emerged at that. The thought of Harry being used as some pawn in Dumbledore’s awful schemes made him sick to his stomach. He opened his mouth to speak, but was interrupted by a knock at the door. A look of annoyance flashed across Severus’ face.