

“He knows what he’s doing, Pads,” Remus assured. “They all just think it’s research for the tournament paying off in unexpected ways. Or the fact that he’s hanging around with older kids more. He spends a lot of time with the Weasley twins, these days. And, of course, the other champions.” Truthfully, Remus was a little worried about the rift between Harry, Ron and Hermione. It was going to get explosive; they were all too strong personalities for it not to. It was just a matter of when and how bad.

“He seems happy.” Sirius was smiling softly as he spoke, and Remus nodded.

“Happier than last year,” he agreed. Deep down, he liked to hope that at least a little bit of that was due to them; he and Sirius and Severus. Giving the boy a safe place to come home to, adults who loved him. Because Severus could deny it all he wanted; he was beginning to love Harry too, just a bit.

“Did you see him?” Sirius asked.

“Just for a little while, he came down to Severus’ rooms to have tea. He didn’t stay long, though; Draco’s giving him dancing lessons to prepare for the Yule Ball.”

Sirius snorted. “We should’ve done that over the summer, as soon as we saw dress robes on the school list.”

“I’m sure he’s having much more fun learning this way,” Remus assured, remembering the blush on Harry’s face and the smile in his eyes as he confessed to getting lessons from Draco.

“Oh, I bet he is,” Sirius drawled, smirking. “I hope there’s pictures. I bet Harry’ll look great in those dress robes. He’s going with Amelia’s niece, you said?”

“Susan,” Remus confirmed. “Nice girl. Definite snake in the badger den. She’ll look after Harry.”

“Hopefully he has a better time of it than we did at that graduation ball,” Sirius remarked. A groan escaped Remus’ lips; he’d almost forgotten about that.

“I try and block that night from my memory,” he confessed, making Sirius laugh. Graduation ball had been an unmitigated disaster, for everyone except James and Lily.

Remus shook his head, setting his empty teacup down and slumping back in the armchair. Harry would probably have a great time at the Yule Ball — no one was likely to hex the dance floor, after all.

It was everything else that came after it, Remus was worried about.