

“Is my Dudders in trouble? He’s a good boy, Officer; if he’s done anything, it’s those awful friends of his, leading my poor boy astray,” Petunia insisted immediately. The officer must have had a look on her face that gave away something, because Petunia let out a quiet whimper.

“I’m so sorry to tell you this, Mr and Mrs Dursley — your son was found in the underpass off Wisteria Walk, he seems to have had some sort of brain bleed. He’s... he’s unresponsive.”

Petunia gasped in horror. Harry was utterly still, fingers clenched around the edge of the cat flap. If this was the muggle police, did the Ministry even know?? Snape seemed sure they did. Were they busy rounding up the dementor? Or was this police officer just an auror in disguise?

Through his aunt’s sobbing, Harry heard snippets of the rest of the conversation; Vernon insisting they would head straight to the hospital, demanding to talk to a superior, asking who found Dudley. Just as Harry was about to sit up in case either of them came upstairs for something, he saw a flash of feathers by the window. Wide eyed, he scrambled across the room, opening the window quietly just in time for a medium-sized brown owl to swoop in and drop a letter on the bed.

It was just a scrap of parchment, a short missive in messy, rushed handwriting.

*Harry,*

*Don’t go anywhere. We’re trying to figure out what happened. Whatever you do, don’t leave the house.*

*Arthur*

He couldn’t help the derisive snort that left his lips. Don’t leave the house? Was Mr Weasley not aware that, as far as the Order was concerned, Harry hadn’t left the house all summer??

If he had been out of the house, maybe the dementor would’ve found him instead of Dudley. His stomach lurched again.

The owl left as soon as it delivered its letter, not waiting for a response. Harry sank onto the bed with shaking knees, curling his fingers around the ragged duvet.

Dudley had been Kissed by a dementor. He was... if not dead yet, then as good as.

All because Harry had been tucked away safe at Seren Du, where nobody could find him.

Part of him was relieved. If he’d been here, if it had been an ordinary summer like Dumbledore and the Order believed... he no doubt would have been right in the dementor’s path. He could cast a Patronus, sure, but he wasn’t allowed to do magic outside of school. He would’ve been expelled, or worse — the Dursleys hadn’t always let him keep his wand in the summer.

Was that what whoever had sent the dementor had hoped would happen? They had to know he could defend himself against them; everyone at Hogwarts knew he could cast a Patronus