

Chapter 39

After a full week without owls arriving at Privet Drive, Remus deemed it safe to remove the mail redirection stone. Ceri retrieved it, and Harry spoke the deactivation spell, turning it back into a plain-looking stone once more. He handed it back to Remus; it might be handy for the future. “Can I borrow Horatio, please?” Harry asked, his brain turning to the stack of letters waiting on the desk in his room.

“Yes, just don’t send him overseas,” Remus replied. Harry grinned and nodded, then hurried up to his room.

Snape’s owl Asphodel was already gone when Harry went up to the Owlery, but the other three were there waiting for something to do. Hedwig hooted softly, flying down to land in front of Harry. “Okay, let me get this figured out.” He didn’t want to overload one owl more than the others, but there were some people he couldn’t send Hedwig to.

Letters to Neville, Susan and Cho went with Horatio. Letters to Blaise, Daphne and Draco went with Artemis — to give Draco his last and wait for a reply, as always. Finally, he attached letters to Charlie, Bill, Viktor and Fleur to Hedwig; she was the strongest, and would best handle the international flight.

He watched the trio of owls fly off into the horizon, letting out a long breath. It was a start. He had the whole summer to get his ducks in a row, now — certainly his two opponents would be doing exactly the same thing.

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Much like last summer, Harry’s guardians refused to work him hard on the weekends. Remus let him do his homework, and even practice some more frivolous spells, but there was to be no serious training on weekends.

Luckily, Harry was assured animagus training didn’t count.

“It doesn’t always work on the first try,” Sirius warned him, making sure Harry was comfortably situated in the middle of the mound of cushions on the living room floor. “We can always brew the potion again in a month or so.”

“It’s going to work,” Harry declared confidently. Across the room, he heard Snape snort quietly.

“Ever your father’s confidence,” he muttered, the words sounding less like an insult than they would have a year ago. The Potions Master approached with a large vial in his hands, the potion securely stoppered.

“Are you ready?” Remus asked quietly, and Harry took a deep breath, relaxing his shoulders. Meditation. It was all about following his magic.