

who are of age, but from what little Albus told me about the plans for the tasks, it's going to be chaos regardless."

"Have they hired a new Defence teacher yet?" Remus asked, still with his hands on Snape's shoulders, like he'd forgotten they were there, thumbs absently working at tense muscles. Snape shook his head.

"If they have, I haven't been informed. Let's just hope it's someone good, with all this happening at the school."

"Well, if you can only enter if you're seventeen, I'll just stay out of it, then, won't I?" Harry pointed out diplomatically. "Yeah there'll be a load of new people around the castle, but most of them will be students. I'll just watch this Triwizard thing, keep my head down, and stay out of Dumbledore's way."

"You'll still have to be careful," Remus warned. "With so many people coming and going, it'll be easier for someone to slip in where they're not supposed to be."

"I mean, being entirely honest, it doesn't sound much more dangerous than my previous school years. Teacher possessed by *literal* Voldemort, giant basilisk roaming the halls looking for blood, mass murderer out to kill me — no offence, Sirius," he added. "All on top of a headmaster who has some secret plan to maybe use me as an actual magical bomb. Just a pretty standard year, to be fair."

The three adults stared at him for a minute.

"Why the hell are we letting him go back to that school?" Sirius muttered.

"Why the hell do I *work* at that school?" Snape agreed, shaking his head. Harry snorted.

"It'll be alright," he said, nonplussed. School-sanctioned danger made a nice change from the regular danger.

"Remember, students aren't supposed to know until it's officially announced," Snape reminded him, and Harry rolled his eyes.

"I'll just add it to the list of all my other secrets, don't worry," he replied. Snape shot him a dark look.

"Cheeky little brat."

"Sorry, Professor, but your glare stopped working on me about the time Sirius turned you into a hamster the other week," Harry admitted apologetically. "All I can think of is those chubby little cheeks."

Snape growled again, while Sirius sniggered. Harry smirked.

The windows had stopped rattling, at least.

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