

Harry wonder how any of the Marauders had managed it, but he supposed they had been properly motivated.

Luckily, Harry often found himself with hours to spare and little else to do, and growing up at the Dursleys had definitely taught him both patience and introspection. If he could spend a week locked in a cupboard with nothing but his own thoughts, he could happily retreat into his own mind to play with the fox version of himself.

Remus and Snape returned, but Remus' 'no war talk at the table' rule was still in place, so Harry had to wait until after dinner to get his information. "What are they planning?" he asked eagerly, desperate for any kind of direction with which to build his own plans around. Sadly, he was disappointed.

"Honestly, very little," Remus remarked. "It's all a bit frustrating, really. We go, we argue in circles for an hour and come up with nothing, then Albus tells us it's been a wonderful productive meeting and we can all go home."

That sounded more like a second year Gryffindor/Slytherin class than a room full of the light's greatest defence, and Snape's lips twitched when Harry said as much. "Considering the majority of the Order *are* Gryffindors, we can't really expect much more," the Slytherin declared, ignoring the eye-rolls from his Gryffindor companions. "If there were enough Ravenclaws and Slytherins to get a majority and start organising the facts, we might make progress, but it seems rather intentional that Albus is letting the meetings stay chaotic."

"To direct away from the fact that he isn't actually doing anything about Voldemort," Remus supplied. Harry grimaced. "The main topic of contention tonight was you, actually, Harry."

The teen raised his eyebrows, and Remus smirked. "It's finally occurred to some of your watchers that it's not normal for a teenage boy to never leave the house. Albus insists it's all part of your grieving process about Cedric — even though the twins shared your letter about the Dursleys with their parents and Sirius. The headmaster is quite certain that you're merely prone to exaggeration in your anguish, and would just rather be left alone."

Something burned within Harry, right beside the overwhelming gratitude that he wasn't in fact stuck at the Dursleys like people thought he was. Dumbledore was so quick to throw him aside at the end of every school year, once he'd fulfilled his daring feat and saved lives at great risk to his own. Harry wondered how long it would take his watchers to realise that the supervision was not for Harry's own safety, but to make sure he wasn't up to anything suspicious.

"Imagine what state I'd be in if I was *actually* left alone to wallow in grief. I might not have made it back to school," he mused to himself, missing Remus and Snape sharing a mildly alarmed look.

"There are enough people concerned about your lack of activity that I think it might be good to have you go back every now and then, just for a little bit," Remus suggested, after a beat of silence. "Sit in the window and look sad for fifteen minutes or so, then have Ceri bring you home. Just to prove you're still in the house."