

“Hey, can you take a look at this? It looks interesting,” Harry said, handing over his book open to a page about spell-chains in duelling. Remus raised an eyebrow, but obligingly took the text, his face lighting up when he started to read.

“Oh, yes! Have I not taught you this before?” Harry shook his head, and the werewolf frowned. “Hmm. I swear it was on my list.” He shrugged, shuffling over so they could both read the book at the same time. “It’s fascinating stuff, really; you—“ But whatever it was, Harry never got to find out; Snape stormed through the door, his rage like a cloud around his shoulders, magic practically vibrating from his skin. “Severus!” Remus jumped to his feet, alarmed. “What’s happened?”

Harry narrowed his eyes, too; the professor had just come from a staff meeting, if he wasn’t mistaken. “What’s Dumbledore done now?” he asked warily, and the Slytherin let out a growl.

“Signed my fucking death warrant, that’s what he’s done,” Snape muttered furiously. Harry looked to Remus in wide-eyed horror.

Remus stepped up to his partner, placing one hand on his shoulder and leaning in, other hand on the back of his neck. “Calm, Severus. Start from the beginning.”

Snape’s back went taut like a bowstring, then all at once he slumped against Remus’ form — as much as Snape could *slump*, at least. Harry felt like an intruder just sitting there, watching them like this, but he couldn’t get away.

“Today, we were introduced to the newest member of Hogwarts staff,” Snape declared, straightening up to look at Remus with a sneer on his face. Both of them seemed to have forgotten Harry was even in the room. “Or, rather, re-introduced. Albus has brought back Horace Slughorn.”

Harry didn’t know who that was, but the name made Remus gasp. “Slughorn? Merlin, I didn’t know he was still kicking around. So— wait. If he’s coming back, that means…” He looked at his partner with trepidation, and Snape gave a short nod.

“I have finally been *granted* the position of Defence Against the Dark Arts teacher,” he confirmed bitterly.

“What?” Harry blurted, unable to help himself, and both men whipped around to look at him. Harry was too bewildered to even blush. “I mean— can he do that?”

Snape snorted. “Albus can do whatever he wants at this point,” he retorted. “But yes; Horace Slughorn was the Potions professor who taught us when we were in school. He retired shortly after I gained my Mastery, which is when I took over, but it seems Albus has convinced him to come out of retirement.”

“Well… that’s not so bad, is it? I mean, at least we’ll have a competent Defence teacher this year.” Even if it would be even harder for Snape to keep his cover as a Death Eater and still teach something useful in a class like DADA. “I know the position is cursed or whatever, but… not everyone who’s taught it has died. Remus is still here.”