

that he was fine to go back to school. Only Snape's assurance that he would keep a stern eye on Harry and make sure he didn't get up to any shenanigans kept them from coming to Hogwarts with him!

Harry was fairly sure that between Snape, Draco and his friends, he wasn't likely to be able to so much as take a piss by himself without someone trying to help.

He knew it came from a place of love, but it was going to get old *very* quickly if they kept it up.

After a nod of approval from the Slytherin professor, the three boys left the office, taking a castle-provided passage to make it look like they were coming to the Great Hall from upstairs; there would be far too many questions if Harry arrived from the dungeons. Snape was still keeping cover as a Death Eater, after all.

"Harry's back!"

"Look, it's Potter!"

"He's alive!"

All through the hall, shouts of Harry's name went up, all in varying levels of surprise and awe. Harry grimaced to himself; the rumours that were likely to come from this little escapade were going to be *ridiculous*. Already people thought him some sort of super-human; now he'd have to admit he sort-of duelled Albus Dumbledore and lived.

He barely made it ten feet in before he was surrounded by his friends, all of them skidding to a halt just shy of actually hugging him, curtailed by Draco's glare. "Give him space," the blond muttered, and Harry rolled his eyes.

"I'm fine," he said, kissing the boy's cheek. Then he raised his eyes to the rest of the group. "I'm fine," he repeated, louder. "Not allowed to use magic for a day or so, but fine." His core was recovering nicely, Snape had assured him. By Monday he'd be totally back to normal — he wouldn't even have any scars from his splinching.

"Are you actually fine or just pretending because *Merlin forbid* Harry Potter show weakness ever," Ginny cut in sharply, rolling her eyes.

"You can come with me to get checked out by Pomfrey in the morning if you want?" Harry offered, shrugging.

"I think I will." Only then did the redhead's stern expression crack, and she darted forward for a quick hug. "Good to have you back, Harry."

"Thanks, Gin."

"What happened?" Parvati asked, then blushed brightly as all eyes turned to her. "Sorry. You don't have to tell us."

"No, it's fine. I was going to," Harry assured. "Just — let me sit down, first?"