

“It has been a long time since the Dark Lord possessed Quirrell, Potter,” Snape pointed out quietly. “With Wormtail aiding him, Merlin only knows what form he inhabits now.” Harry’s stomach churned. “Here, take this.” He summoned a vial from his shelf and passed it to Harry, the label declaring it to be a Headache-Relieving potion. “It’s no ordinary headache, but that should take the edge off. I suggest you go back to your dorm and check your Occlumency shields are as they should be. After an intrusion like that, I wouldn’t be surprised to find them... rattled.”

Harry downed the potion, grimacing at the taste. “Will you tell Remus?” he asked. Snape nodded. “Good. I... can I go back to sleep, or will it happen again?” the vision had left Harry wrung-out, and he was desperate for a nap.

“I imagine the connection only forms when the Dark Lord is feeling particularly strong emotions,” Snape said. “As long as he is done... celebrating, you should be safe to sleep. If it happens again, call for Ceri and have her bring you to me.”

“Yes, sir.” Harry got to his feet, leaving the empty potion vial on the desk. “Thanks. I... yeah. Thanks.” He almost thought about giving Snape a hug, desperate for some kind of contact after a vision like that, but he kept his hands at his sides. Their relationship wasn’t there yet. He could probably persuade the twins to hug him without asking questions, they were good about that.

Harry left the dungeons, taking his time on the way up to Gryffindor Tower. On the third floor, he paused when he heard voices. “Terrible thing, terrible thing. So close to the end of the tournament, too!” It was Minister Fudge. “With any luck, we’ll find him wandering the forest and pack him off to St Mungo’s. Can’t say I’m surprised he cracked, what with his personal history.”

“I’m telling you, he’s not in the forest.” That was Moody, his familiar growl echoing through the corridor. “He got out of there awfully quickly for someone who’s supposedly lost his mind.”

“Gentlemen,” Dumbledore cut in, “I’m sure there’s a reasonable explanation for all of this. Now, shall we?” They rounded the corner before Harry had a chance to hide, and he was left stood at the foot of the stairs, wide-eyed. “Harry. Shouldn’t you be in class?”

“I came over a bit faint in Divination,” Harry told him, looking sheepish. “Think I’ve been burning the candle at both ends, y’know, getting ready for the third task. Professor Trelawney sent me back to the tower for a rest.”

“Don’t overwork yourself, my boy!” Fudge said, looking impatient. “Come, Dumbledore; I have meetings after this one, you know!”

Dumbledore gave Harry one last searching look, then followed Fudge and Moody down the stairs. When they were gone, Harry let out a relieved breath, carrying on up to the Tower.

So even Fudge was involved in the search for Crouch now, hmm? He wondered if they would come up with anything.