

Harry grimaced. “So I’ll spend a few weeks playing good little Gryffindor, make up some things to tell them that’ll have them believing I’ve given up all my secrets, and then...” He trailed off, unsure what came next. Keep pretending until Dumbledore was dead? How long was he supposed to keep up the charade?

“You only need last until the end of the school year,” Snape assured him. “Even so, I think you can get away with avoiding Weasley and Granger before then, as long as you keep your public friendships to mostly Gryffindors. Dumbledore won’t have done anything to change your personality too drastically — people would question if you suddenly refused to speak to the other champions, after being outwardly friendly to them for so long. Likely he just wants a little more insight into your private escapades.”

It was a small mercy, but a mercy nonetheless. “I suppose we’d better figure out what I can tell him to get him off my back, then,” he said with a shrug, pulling his password protected notebook out of his bag.

There had to be something he could let go of, to protect the secrets he really cared about.

.-.-.-.

About a week after the second task, Harry walked into the Great Hall to find all eyes on him — not unusual in itself, but the wave of whispers and giggles that broke out immediately after gave Harry a pretty good idea what might have happened. Harry sank into the empty seat between Neville and Ginny, raising an eyebrow at the redheaded girl. “What’s the damage this time?” Ginny giggled, passing him a copy of *Witch Weekly*. He studied the magazine. “Not the *Prophet*?”

“This one isn’t exactly *Prophet* material,” Ginny told him, opening the magazine to a specific page. She seemed amused, so Harry figured it couldn’t be too bad. Ron and Hermione sat on the bench opposite them, Hermione casting a disparaging look at the magazine.

“I can’t believe you have a subscription to that rag, Ginny,” she remarked. Ginny shrugged.

“Not all of it is garbage.”

Harry was busy reading the article in question — which was *definitely* garbage.

### ***‘Harry Potter’s Woes of the Heart***

*A boy like no other — but still suffering the trials of any teenage love affair. Deprived of love since the tragic demise of his parents, fourteen year-old Harry Potter found solace at Hogwarts; or so he thought. His steady girlfriend, muggleborn Hermione Granger, seems to have developed a taste for famous wizards.’*

The article went on to express how Hermione had cruelly cheated on Harry with Viktor Krum, breaking Harry’s heart shortly before the Yule Ball and sending him into Ginny’s arms. “Oi, Gin, there’s a quote here from you about me being a crap kisser,” Harry pointed out, and the redhead snorted.