

“It’s fine,” Blaise dismissed, waving him off. “Better instructions won’t help when exams roll around. But if there are any other useful tips in there, let us know.”

“Will do,” Harry promised, glad his friends didn’t seem to be jealous or annoyed. Of course, they were Slytherins; they were all for using whatever resources you had at your disposal.

Blaise and Theo bid them goodbye and headed back to Slytherin, while Harry and Draco made their way up to the library. “You know who that book belonged to, don’t you?”

“Of course I do,” Harry replied amusedly. “Lived with him long enough, haven’t I? I can’t believe he just left it in a cupboard somewhere.”

“Thank Merlin Weasley didn’t find it, he’d be insufferable,” Draco agreed. Harry grimaced. Yes, Ron Weasley suddenly developing a talent for Potions was not something they needed.

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That evening, Harry snuck down to Snape’s quarters under the invisibility cloak just before curfew, earning raised eyebrows from the man. “If you have come to gloat about stealing my first lesson away from me in your little defence club, you needn’t bother; I have plenty more to torture your classmates with.”

Harry laughed, shedding the cloak. “No, no, I’m not here about that. Although you’re welcome, by the way. And thanks for the detention — I got a note from Dumbledore asking me to meet him then, so now I’ve got a great excuse to skip.”

Snape frowned at that. “You cannot avoid him forever.”

“I can sure as hell try,” Harry returned. Then he reached into his pocket, pulling out the battered copy of *Advanced Potion Making*. “*Half-Blood Prince* sound familiar to you?” he drawled teasingly. Snape’s eyebrows rose.

“Where did you get that?”

Harry explained the events of Slughorn’s class to the man. “I can’t believe you left this just *lying around*, but I’m glad you did; I won a bottle of Felix Felicis because of you.”

“Horace always was fond of bribery to win friends,” Snape muttered dryly. “I did not leave that *lying around*, I assure you. The last I saw of it, it was on my shelf, right here.” He gestured to the very bottom corner of his bookshelf, where Harry could see a couple of other tattered-looking schoolbooks.

“Then how did it get into the classroom cupboard?” Harry blinked, perplexed. Snape’s lips turned in a scowl.

“Who do we know with access to my personal quarters during the summer, and a vested interest in Ronald Weasley feeling superior to you?”

Harry stared at him. “You think Dumbledore left it there for Ron to find?” That seemed unnecessarily convoluted — and exactly the kind of plan Dumbledore might go for. Harry