

Hermione wasn't at dinner, but the hall was abuzz with the story of her talking back to Professor Trelawney. Luckily, Draco didn't seem to have told anyone about her punching him, though there was a fairly impressive bruise rising on his pale cheekbone. Harry winced; would Draco be mad at him for it? They weren't supposed to meet for another few days. Harry would have to wait to ask if he was alright.

"I'm gonna take some food up to Hermione," Ron said once he'd eaten his fill, which as always was an impressive amount. He wrapped some roast beef and potatoes in a napkin, grabbing another one to fill with parsnips. "You coming?"

"Can't. Patronus lesson with Lupin," Harry replied apologetically. He had the spell down pretty well, now — it hadn't taken shape yet, but he could get a fairly solid shield up against his boggart-dementor.

"Oh, right, yeah. Well, have fun." Ron grabbed as much food as he could in his large hands, and the two parted ways, Harry headed up the familiar route to Lupin's office. He dragged his feet a little, feeling a little awkward about seeing the man again after basically breaking down on him. Lupin didn't seem to hold it against him, though.

"I hear Miss Granger had quite the eventful afternoon," Lupin remarked once they'd put the boggart away for the evening, sat in their usual chairs with tea in their hands. Harry winced.

"You heard about Divination, then?" Lupin nodded. "I mean, I don't blame her, really. She's doing about fifty subjects at once, and Divination's a bit..." Harry trailed off sheepishly, not wanting to insult one professor in front of another. "I wish I could drop it, too. Is there any way to switch your elective subjects if you realise you don't like them?" Truthfully he'd love to drop Care of Magical Creatures, too, but he couldn't bear to do that to Hagrid.

"I'm afraid not. Not this late in the year, anyway. You'll have to stick it out until your OWLs, I'm afraid." Lupin sounded truly apologetic. Harry sighed.

"I figured as much."

"You could always independent study for a different elective? Arithmancy, or Ancient Runes, or even both. You don't have to be enrolled in the class to take the OWL, if you contact the ministry about it. Your mother took an OWL in Muggle Studies without ever going to a single class. She said it was an easy O," Lupin informed him, a smile tugging at his lips.

Harry hadn't realised that was possible. "It'd be harder to teach myself Runes and Arithmancy, though. Muggle Studies is easy, especially if you grew up with them." A memory popped into his head. "You were top of your class in Runes, weren't you?" The yearbook had said so.

"Indeed I was. And third in Arithmancy — only your mother and Sirius beat me there. I'd be happy to help however I can if you chose to go down that route. No disrespect to any of my colleagues, but Divination and Care of Magical Creatures aren't the most... useful subjects in the world."