

Harry got the distinct feeling there were two different conversations happening at once.

“It seems like some sort of joke parchment, Severus. Designed to insult whoever tries to read it. Probably a Zonko’s product.”

“Really,” Snape replied flatly. “There’s nothing... familiar about it, to you?”

“Should there be?” Lupin asked, seeming utterly unfazed by Snape’s anger.

Was Snape trying to imply that Lupin gave him the map?

“I *will* have answers, Lupin,” Snape growled. Calm as you please, Lupin plucked the map from Snape’s hands, offering the man a genial smile.

“Oh, I’d be delighted to give them to you, Severus, once I’ve studied it further. But I’m sure it’s just a harmless prank parchment. Now, if we’re quite finished here, I’m sure Harry has other places to be, don’t you Harry?”

He wanted to ask for the map back, but he couldn’t do that with Snape in the room.

“Right. Yeah. I’ll just be going then...” He didn’t dare look at Snape as he left the office, his heart pounding as he made for the third floor to go get his bag. Somehow, he’d escaped. He just had to ask Lupin for the map back, and then he’d be good.

“Harry!” His head snapped up, and he saw Ron sprinting down the corridor towards him, red-faced. “I tried... to get here... fast as I could... couldn’t find you... you alright?” He was panting, having clearly just run the entire way from Hogsmeade.

“Fine. Had a run in with Snape, but... it’s fine. I’ll tell you later,” he added, not wanting to linger too long in the corridor. He walked with his friend back towards Gryffindor Tower, his thoughts still back in Snape’s office.

The Slytherin clearly expected Lupin to recognise the map. But why?

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As soon as the door shut behind Harry, Severus rounded on Remus. “We both know what that is,” he said bluntly. “I am *astounded* that you gave it to Potter, under the circumstances.”

“I didn’t give it to him!” Remus insisted, taking the map back out of his pocket and staring at it. “I had no idea Harry had it. I didn’t even know it still existed! Peter got it confiscated by Filch a month before we graduated.”

The words were still floating across the page, the familiar sets of handwriting making his heart ache softly. “I’m, uh, sorry about the nose comment,” he added cheekily. “It was fifth year. After— y’know.” The fight he’d thought would break them — until a year later, when Sirius almost ruined everything.

Severus’ face shuttered for a moment. “Then it seems rather tame, considering,” he remarked dryly. “You swear you didn’t give it to Potter?”