

breaking recklessness.” His eyes flashed, a sneer twisting his features. “There won’t be a Triwizard Tournament to stroke your over-inflated ego, this year. Perhaps you may finally learn some *humility*.”

“I managed just fine without the three years before the Triwizard,” Harry shot back. It was hard to maintain the hateful look in his eyes; this was *fun*. When he felt a smile threaten to creep through, he drew up on all his frustration at being trapped in Grimmauld. “I’m sure there will be something to keep me busy. Another Death Eater teacher, perhaps. Has Dumbledore hired a new Defence teacher yet?”

“*Professor* Dumbledore, Potter,” Snape corrected. “And that’s none of your business.”

“That’s a no, then.” Harry’s lips twitched. “Blimey, is it really getting that difficult to find people who don’t want to kill me?”

Someone further down the table snickered. Harry thought it might’ve been Tonks.

“Despite what I’m sure your *dogfather* has told you, the world — and Hogwarts’ staffing practice — does not actually revolve around you,” Snape drawled at him.

“Yeah, kid; Defence professors were dropping like flies long before you hit the scene,” Bill joked, winking at Harry.

The rest of the Order managed to diffuse the situation, keeping conversation relatively civil through the remainder of dinner — though Harry couldn’t help throwing a few more snide remarks Snape’s way, which were returned in kind viciously. It felt good, being able to actually *argue* with someone who wasn’t just going to coddle and patronise him. Someone who could handle it if Harry’s venomous tongue got a little too sharp.

It helped too that the others were looking at him like he was either utterly mad or incredibly brave, speaking to Snape like that, even outside of school. Perhaps it was foolish of him, but it helped cement Snape’s reputation as hated dungeon bat — especially when he promised Harry a week of detention once school started back up.

“You can’t do that! It’s summer!” Harry argued indignantly, making Snape smirk in satisfaction.

“*Watch me*,” he hissed.

“I think that’s enough for one night,” Remus cut in, his professorly ‘disappointed’ face firmly in place. “Harry’s had a difficult summer, Severus; you can’t punish him for things he says outside of school. Though he really should *apologise*,” he added with a pointed glance at the dark-haired teen. Harry huffed mulishly, glaring up at them.

“Sorry, *sir*,” he bit out. Remus gave him a look that said he might be overdoing it a touch, but Harry held firm.

“No matter,” Snape dismissed. “I’m sure he will earn those detentions soon once school begins, if he cannot learn to keep a civil tongue in his head. I should have expected his