

“Oi!” Frankie exclaimed, looking over with offence written across his face. He was sat with Remus, Severus and Draco — and had been practically shadowing his housemaster all evening. “Wanting to win isn’t being *mean*, you little brat. I won’t go easy just because you’re eight.”

Nashira gave Harry a pointed look, a clear ‘*that is how it should be*’, and Harry sighed, looping his arm around Amy’s waist.

“Okay, then. I can be mean. But if anyone cries, I’m blaming Nash,” he warned, then grinned down at his new teammate. “Let’s kick their arses, yeah?”

It might be a steep learning curve, but Harry was more than willing to figure it out.

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Diagon Alley was a place Harry hadn’t been in over a year, and he knew he had to face up to it. The idea of going to a place with so many people — people who would likely not be as polite regarding his boundaries as those at the Ministry — made his skin crawl, but he’d have to go there eventually. And he didn’t want to wait until booklists arrived, or the alley would be even more swarmed than usual.

So he made his plans, roped Sirius in so he couldn’t chicken out of it, kissed Draco goodbye, and apparated to London.

The sheer volume of the wizarding shopping area made his pulse pick up. Sirius squeezed his shoulder, eyes darkened with concern. “You alright, kiddo?”

“Yeah. Fine. Just,” he grimaced, looking ahead at the throng of people, “if you spend half this visit carrying a fox in your arms, I apologise in advance.”

Sirius laughed, ruffling his hair. “No judgement from me, after the amount of times I became Padfoot to avoid people.” Then he put his arm round Harry’s shoulders, and led him into the crowd.

Bringing Sirius had another advantage — the man actually had some shopping to do, so Harry wouldn’t just be wandering aimlessly and getting steadily more panicked. Sirius wanted to buy some presents for the kids to help them feel a bit more welcome when they eventually moved out of the Pottery, and it was Harry’s job to stop him going overboard.

“Do you know if Nash likes flying at all, pup?” Sirius asked, eyes landing on Quality Quidditch Supplies. “Because I thought about getting the twins some kid brooms and I’d like to get her one too, but I don’t know if she’d even like it.”

His fretting was adorable, and Harry grinned. “She hasn’t flown much since first year lessons, but I think she’d like to do more. Just — not a Firebolt, yeah?” They didn’t need to be buying a fourteen year-old with very little flying experience the fastest broom on the market.