

the time they made it inside. Snape made quick work of that with a couple of Drying charms, squeezing Draco's shoulder. "It's good to see you well, Draco," he murmured, his tone warm in that way only Remus and Draco warranted. Draco looked a little brighter for seeing the man, and a curl of guilt rose within Harry; here he'd been monopolising Draco's godfather, too. He was the worst boyfriend!

Ceri had prepared a feast fit for royalty, with another masterpiece of a cake; this one covered in small fondant foxes, which prompted an explanation for the two Malfoys.

"Corrupting him further, are you?" Narcissa remarked to Sirius, who grinned unrepentantly.

"That's so *cool*," Draco said, envy in his eyes. "Uncle Severus, can I—"

"I planned to brew the potion for you once you had returned to school," Snape cut him off smoothly. 'When it's safer' went unsaid, but the delay didn't bother Draco. He beamed, ignoring his mother's eye-roll.

"If I had known you'd start taking godparenting advice from this cretin, I might have protested more at your choice in companion," the Malfoy matriarch grumbled. It was all for show; Harry knew if she really didn't want Draco learning, Snape never would have mentioned it. Quite frankly, any advantage Draco could have would be worth it.

"And here I thought I was your favourite family member," Sirius mock-gasped.

"Andromeda remains my favourite, as you well know," Narcissa replied. "Regardless of whether or not we're on speaking terms." Her grey eyes were sad. Sirius cleared his throat.

"About that. Recent events have put me back in touch with her daughter; she's an auror, you know." From the look on her face, Harry didn't doubt Narcissa knew exactly what her niece was doing with her life. "Obviously we've had to be fairly careful how we talk, with certain manipulative old windbags floating about." Remus snorted. "She helped me get in touch with Andi again. Explain my innocence and all."

Almost imperceptibly, Narcissa's grip tightened around her cutlery. "Sirius, I can't—"

"I'm not saying you have to," Sirius continued. "I'm just letting you know I'm working on sorting out how close to Dumbledore that side of the family is. I never could tell how much of a hand he had in her running off with Ted — not that I begrudge her that, he's a top bloke. But if you want me to pass on a message once I'm certain she can be trusted, I'd be happy to."

"I'll think about it," Narcissa said eventually, lips pursed. "Let's not do anything reckless, though. There's far too much at stake."

"Andi would rip the world in half for her littlest sister and you know it," Sirius argued gently, softening in the barest smile. "You need an out that can't be traced back to me, Cissa. Just in case the boys end up public; I'd be the first place your husband would look."

"We're being careful," Harry piped up indignantly.