

“It’ll be hard trying to find a table anywhere decent at such short notice,” she sniffed, then turned to Harry. “You’ll be gone when we get back?” He nodded.

“Should be, yeah.” He couldn’t see the Weasleys wanting to stick around long.

“Fine. Just... stay up in your room until then.” She seemed to realise she’d given Harry an order, and glanced fearfully at Snape for a second, but held her ground. Harry merely rolled his eyes.

“Don’t worry, I have no desire to join you in the living room,” he assured dryly. “I’ll just leave my stuff here so it’s ready when I go, shall I?” Severus resized Harry’s trunk and Hedwig’s cage, and Harry leant them against the wall in the middle of the hallway. Petunia looked like she was about to have a fit.

Harry looked at Snape. To his utter bewilderment, he actually felt a pang of sadness at having to say goodbye to the abrasive man. He was going to *miss him*. “Thanks, Professor,” he said somewhat awkwardly. “I’ll see you at school.”

“Do try and make it there in one piece,” Snape replied dryly. Harry laughed.

“I’ll try my best. Enjoy the rest of your summer.” He wondered what it would be like at Seren Du without him. Quieter, probably. Snape would be glad for it.

Snape gave Petunia one last glare, then apparated away. Harry shared a long, tense look with his aunt. “I’ll be upstairs. I’ll, uh, see you later. Remember, they’re coming at five.”

As she went to go no doubt complain to her husband about that awful man bringing their equally awful nephew back, Harry trudged up the stairs and turned back to his room. He was a little surprised they hadn’t turned it back into Dudley’s second bedroom in his absence. He stood in the doorway, surveying the tiny space sadly. Now he knew what it was like to have a real bedroom, where he was allowed to actually decorate and own things and the furniture wasn’t all broken hand-me-downs, he could hardly believe the Dursleys had put him in this and he’d been *happy* with it.

Anything was a step up from the cupboard, he supposed.

He’d brought a book with him to read while he waited, and he smiled slightly when, an hour later, Uncle Vernon yelled up the stairs. “Boy! We’re leaving. You’d better not be here when we get home. Don’t eat anything out of the fridge.” And then they were gone.

Harry moved downstairs, laughing to himself at the absurdity of reading a book about healing charms on the sofa in the living room of his relatives’ house. If anyone had been home to see it, he would’ve been beaten for sure.

As five o’clock drew closer, Harry realised he didn’t know how the Weasleys were getting there. They didn’t have the car anymore; he and Ron had seen to that in second year. Perhaps Mr Weasley would just apparate in and pick him up, like Snape had done?