

They hadn't set the table in any fancy way, but there was a decent bottle of red set out to breathe, and Angie didn't know about the chocolate fudge cake he'd hidden in the back of the cold box.

"My lady," Fred said, pouring wine with an exaggerated flourish that made her giggle exasperatedly. He winked. "Happy birthday."

"Thank you." She tapped her glass to his. "Happy Valentine's."

When they were kids, Angelina used to get annoyed sharing her birthday with Valentine's Day. Claiming it was barely even a holiday, that it didn't exist to her.

When she'd learned the twins were born on April 1<sup>st</sup>, that eased the way a bit. The *special birthdays club*, they'd called themselves. Even when Angie got a bit older and hit the age where she might *want* all the fuss that went along with Valentine's, the twins always made sure her birthday didn't get lost in the noise. Especially once she finally agreed to be Fred's girlfriend.

"I'd say sorry for making you cook on your birthday, but this is delicious, so I'm not going to," he told her, and she beamed.

"I like cooking on my birthday," she insisted. "You did breakfast, so we're even."

Fred smirked — George had called in Alicia for the day to cover the shop with him all morning, so Fred and Angie could have breakfast in bed and a long birthday lie-in. Twin brothers were good for something, it turned out.

"Successful day, then?"

"Yeah, not bad." Her smile faltered, just for a moment, and Fred knew what she was thinking — she hadn't seen her parents since they'd taken an illegal portkey to Nigeria over a month ago, going to hide out with her grandmother's family.

"I wish you could chat to them, Angie," he sighed, knowing how much she missed them. "If I could find a way to make it safe, I'd do it for you in a heartbeat."

"I know. It's fine, really." Angelina reached over, taking his hand. "It won't be forever."

"Just a few months," he agreed, as they always said.

In a few months, the war would be over. One way or another.

Things were getting too tense to last much longer than that.

But those were far too dark thoughts to have on such a joyous day, so Fred gave his girlfriend a cheeky grin. "Want to go over and see the kids on Thursday?" he asked. "I thought I might take them some pygmy puffs."

Angelina raised an eyebrow. "Careful, there; Charlie will fight you for them."