

“Considering I plan to spend at least three weeks of summer at his flat, I don’t need to come visit you to see my boyfriend,” he said, “but I’ll keep it in mind.”

“Please, someone come visit,” Ginny begged. “Otherwise it’ll just be me and Ron.”

Harry grimaced in sympathy, and he wasn’t the only one.

“You can come stay with me,” Neville offered, and then went bright pink. “I mean, Gran wants to meet you properly, and I’m sure she wouldn’t mind if you wanted to come over for a week or two. Or more. Or less. Whatever, really.”

Ginny laughed, pecking her babbling boyfriend on the cheek. “I’d love to,” she assured. “Talk to your gran and let me know.”

“I’m gonna be a bit all over the place, but you’re always welcome at Sirius’ place,” Harry assured her. He hadn’t said a thing about Charlie yet, even though Sirius told him Bill proposed to Fleur the day after the battle at the Ministry. Neither of those things were his news to share.

Harry looked out the window as the conversation turned to miscellaneous other summer plans, watching the green hills of the highlands roll by. “I’m gonna have a wander,” he said, getting to his feet. “I’ll be back in a bit.”

They waved him off, unconcerned, and Harry stepped out into the train corridor. He glanced into compartments as he passed them, looking for familiar faces; he found one full of Gryffindor seventh years fresh from their graduation ceremony, and was dragged inside so Angelina and Alicia could hug him and make him promise to replace them with good chasers, but not *too* good, because they wanted him to miss them. Another compartment held a bunch of Hufflepuffs in his year, and while Megan Jones and Oliver Rivers eyed him coolly, Susan and the rest were happy to chat.

It was still a surprise to Harry, how many people he knew in the school — it was even more now, he realised, since he’d done the HA. Now he had all sorts of people waving at him, exchanging friendly words, wishing him a good summer. Loads of his friends promising to keep in touch.

He’d come a long way from the boy who only had Ron and Hermione.

Speaking of whom, he found them in a compartment with Dean and Seamus; Hermione reading a book while the three boys played exploding snap. Harry didn’t stop to chat, but as he looked in the door Hermione caught his eye, giving him an unreadable look that made him vaguely uncomfortable.

He carried on quickly, and was relieved to find Cho with the Hufflepuff seventh year boys a few compartments down. All of them showed signs of crying, and Cho was holding the picture of Cedric that had been up in the Room of Requirement for so long.

“Don’t be a stranger, eh, Potter?” Patrick said, reaching out to shake Harry’s hand. “If you need us, we’ll be there. Cho knows where to find us.”