

One of these days, Harry would have to figure out if his manipulation of the wards extended to apparating through them. Having to walk all the way to the gates was such a pain.

But not now. He was not in the emotional state to be experimenting with that.

The sight of Seren Du towering ahead of him made Harry's knees weaken with relief. This was a place that the war hadn't touched, this was safety and comfort and *home*.

Ceri greeted them at the door, beaming. "Ceri is glad to have Masters and Mistress home!" she chirped.

"We're glad too, Ceri. Would you do a round of hot chocolates up to the family living room, please?" Sirius requested. "And then when you've got time, head to Hogwarts and help Dobby pack up all our things? We left a bit abruptly."

The elf nodded, disappearing, and Harry dragged his feet up the stairs, still tucked under Sirius' arm. In the living room, the pair collapsed on the sofa together, Sirius easily shifting to cuddle Harry, stretched out across the cushions. A quick spell from Draco had both of their shoes removed, the blond offering a gentle smile.

Harry hoped he wasn't upset, didn't take it personally that Harry was so attached to Sirius. He just... needed a parent, right now.

Ceri arrived with hot chocolate, and Harry sat up carefully so he didn't spill. Holding the warm mug in both hands, he sipped the sweet liquid, feeling it run all the way down to his stomach. His shoulders eased, his brain finally able to think of something other than Dumbledore's eyes losing their twinkle for good, locked with his.

He looked up. Across from him, Remus smiled. "Chocolate cures everything," he said knowledgeably. Harry snorted.

"I just... I can't believe he's gone," he breathed, shaking his head. "I didn't—I didn't mean to."

"No one blames you, pup," Sirius said immediately. "Everyone there saw you use a Disarming charm. He was just old, and suffering under that curse."

"It's a miracle he lasted as long as he did," Severus confirmed.

Harry wondered how it would have been, if Dumbledore *had* died in whatever hole he was hiding in. How long before any of them would have known?

Would it have felt better than this?

"End of an era," Charlie murmured, "and a new one begins." He smiled encouragingly at Harry. "Good thing we've got so many of us making sure it's a bloody good one, eh?"

His words eased something deep within Harry's chest — the worry that he might be becoming like Dumbledore, or worse, like Voldemort. Too powerful, too unquestioned, too unfettered.