

Suddenly, Harry was very suspicious of the look on his godfather's face. "When you say 'family' dinner..."

"Draco and Cissa are coming too," Sirius confirmed, bouncing on his toes. "Fleur swiped the bit of parchment Dumbledore used to let her in on the Secret. I'll be damned if I let that old goat keep my family out of my own bloody house." He grinned devilishly. "We tried to get the twins and Ginny in too — and the plus-ones, of course — but they've got stuff going on tonight. Also I thought perhaps it would be best not to have *too* many people around, considering Cissa and Andi haven't seen each other since before Tonks was born." A shrug. "We'll have the rest of them over some other time."

Harry blinked; that was a lot of information to take in at once. "Okay. Well, sounds good. Is Snape coming, or...?"

"No, he's managed to wiggle his way out of it. Don't want too many people knowing about him and Moony yet, after all. Might get back to the wrong ears." Sirius scowled lightly, but shook it off. "Anyway, the Malfoys will be back at four, so we're leaving at six, make sure you're presentable." He wiggled his eyebrows, making Harry blush.

"Shouldn't I be telling *you* that," he retorted, pointed gaze reminding his godfather that it had not been Draco and Harry who got caught half-naked in the library together.

Sirius just grinned wider, entirely unrepentant. "Pup, when you've had the life I have, people forgive your eccentricities," he declared happily. "As long as I'm wearing clean clothes, I'm more presentable than half the family expects of me." Harry snickered; that was certainly true.

He did a mental headcount; even without Snape, that was still eleven people meeting for dinner.

And to think, that was still missing a huge chunk of the people Harry considered family these days.

"Did you ever think you could have this, Siri?" he blurted, voice suddenly small. Sirius frowned at him. "Family dinners with people you don't hate. Y'know. *This*." He made a broad gesture, vaguely encompassing the whole house. Sirius' gaze softened in understanding, and he leaned against the door frame.

"Not for a long time," he admitted. "And then never again after Prongs died. But... life's got a funny way of surprising you."

"Sirius!" That was Charlie, calling from somewhere in the direction of the stairs. "I'm popping into work for a bit! Trouble with one of the hatchlings. But I'll be back in time for dinner, promise. Love you!"

"Good luck, don't die!" Sirius called back cheerfully. "Love you too!"

There was the sound of footsteps on the stairs, and the front door opening and shutting. Sirius looked to Harry, and laughed, running a hand through his hair. "No, pup, I definitely didn't