

Harry scowled lightly at him. “We’ll be fine,” he insisted. “See you at dinner.”

They parted ways, and Harry strode over to Draco’s side, offering the blond a grin. “Morning,” he greeted, taking one of the sandwiches from his boyfriend. It was still warm, carefully wrapped so the bacon and eggs wouldn’t fall out. “Thanks. Didn’t feel like eating breakfast in the hall this morning?”

Draco shrugged, falling into step beside Harry as they headed out onto the grounds, huddled close against the freezing wind sweeping across the landscape. “I’ll take any excuse to skip sitting in that damned hall these days,” he replied, eyes darkening. Harry hummed in sympathy; he understood the feeling. Between everyone staring at him like he was about to crack, Dumbledore’s suspicious gaze, and the potential delivery of black envelopes, Harry was getting sick of mealtimes at Hogwarts too.

The boys ate as they walked, falling into the steady stream of students heading down to the village. Even now, nearly two months into term, they got strange looks just for being together, being friendly. Harry tried his best to ignore the eyes on him, focusing on enjoying his time with Draco.

Hogsmeade, when they reached it, was quieter than usual — not only because many students had seen the temperature outside and decided to give the weekend a miss. Zonko’s Joke Shop was boarded up, and they weren’t the only ones; it seemed even the village’s proximity to the school wasn’t enough to leave people feeling safe.

“Or Zonko’s has gone under because the twins are putting them out of business,” Draco remarked when Harry said as much, making him blink.

“That quickly? You think so?”

“From what Blaise has told me about how business was going over the summer, it wouldn’t surprise me,” Draco mused, shrugging. “Of course, Zonko’s has — or had, rather — the upper hand with a physical presence so close to the school, but the twins got so good at sneaking owl-orders under Umbridge’s nose last year, their customers don’t have to worry about deliveries getting caught.”

Harry knew the twins were still paying Dobby a small fee to deliver within the castle, and he smirked to himself. “Maybe they can buy out Zonko’s, have a second shop here.”

“Blaise would certainly like that,” Draco agreed, matching his expression. Harry laughed.

“As if George living in Diagon is stopping those two from meeting up,” he said, shaking his head. He knew the redhead was somewhere around the village — or perhaps had already snuck into the school to visit his beau, given the terrible weather.

A particularly strong gust of icy wind made him shiver, leaning in a little closer to Draco. He had to stop himself from sliding an arm around the blond’s waist to properly cuddle up for warmth — he couldn’t do that in public. They were just friends, as far as the rest of the school was concerned. Though, truthfully, Harry was caring less and less about keeping that