

“She takes requests, too. Show him the duck!” Ginny bounced eagerly in her seat, laughing when Tonks’ nose and mouth became a bright yellow duck bill. “Merlin, that never gets old.”

When her face was back to normal, Tonks shot Harry a wink. “What do you think?”

“Very cool,” he confirmed, grinning.

The conversation was interrupted by Mrs Weasley’s declaration that food was ready, and the chaos began; dishes floated every which way as people summoned what they wanted, occasionally both summoning the same thing at once and causing a minor spill. Harry was learning first-hand what Sirius had meant about his cousin being clumsy — in serving herself, Tonks had almost flung the beef shoulder across the table, caused an avalanche of mashed potato, and somehow got peas in Remus’ hair.

“I’m so sorry, Remus!” she exclaimed, cheeks turning pink. The werewolf smiled, brushing the vegetables from his hair and vanishing them.

“No worries; I’ve had worse from food fights back in my school days.”

“That was *not* an invitation, boys,” Mrs Weasley reprimanded when the twins lit up. George pouted, making Harry snicker.

“Do all these people live here, then?” he asked, quietly, wondering how he was ever going to get peace and quiet. The Weasleys in themselves were a large crew, but there were at least five other people besides.

“No, they’re just here for the free food,” Sirius assured. “It’s just you, me and the Weasleys here permanently. Until you lot all bugger off to school, that is.” A shadow crept into his eyes, one Harry hated seeing. He pressed his knee to his godfather’s.

“Sometimes I wish I didn’t have to.”

“Don’t be silly, Harry.” Across the table, Hermione pursed her lips at him. “You love Hogwarts. And you have to go back; we have our OWLs this year.” She paused, smiling. “Don’t worry, I’ve already started working on your revision schedule. And we’re mostly just cleaning around here, so you’ll have time to do your summer homework.”

“I’ve already done my summer homework, Hermione,” Harry told her, resisting the urge to roll his eyes.

“Again? Harry, I really wish you’d let me check it this time.”

“I’ve been locked in my room for a month with nothing to do and no contact with the outside world,” Harry bit out. “Homework was all I had — I think it’s as good as it’s going to get.”

That seemed to knock the wind out of Hermione’s sails a little.

“You know we would’ve written to you if we could, Harry,” she insisted, ducking as a plate of bread rolls nearly decapitated her. “But even if we could have, Professor Dumbledore told us not to put any sensitive information in a letter.”