

Ginny scowl and duck away, laughing.

It looked like just about everyone who had come to the castle for refuge had left it now the world was safe for them — looking around the room, Harry only saw his family and friends, and those who fought alongside them. Except for a few he suspected were waiting on loved ones to be released from the Hospital Wing, it seemed the castle was back down to only hosting a few extra bodies. The core of the rebellion, still in need of a base of operations while they figured out how to move forward.

Harry had never seen them all so happy. The hall was filled with laughter and bright conversation, even those still recovering from injuries in good spirits. They hadn't forgotten what it cost them, of course — Harry saw more than one toast to fallen friends happen that evening — but alongside the mourning, they had to take the chance to celebrate their victory. To remember why it was all worth it.

The entire past Gryffindor quidditch team — Harry's original quidditch team — were clustered around the end of one table with their partners and Viktor Krum, Oliver Wood's exuberant hand gestures making Harry suspect they were talking quidditch. Charlie was with them, too, one hand tangled in Sirius' on the tabletop, both of them in entirely different conversations but still connected, always in each others' orbit. Opposite Sirius, Remus was practically sitting in Snape's lap; the werewolf was glowing with joy at finally being able to express his love openly, arm draped around Severus' back as he chatted with his best friend. Snape didn't really *do* 'glowing with joy', but he was smiling ever so slightly, and putting up with all the noise, so that said it all as far as Harry was concerned.

Most of the heirs were on the other table, none of them bothering to try and go home when they'd all have to go to the Wizengamot in the morning. Besides, they had earned this — they had fought in this battle that the adults insisted they were too young to handle, and they had survived it and won and they deserved to be proud of that. They were with other students, too; the HA past and present, all those who Harry had started out with just a Disarming charm and a simple Protego. How far they had come, now.

"Are you getting maudlin, Potter?" Draco asked with raised eyebrows, drawing Harry away from his perusal of the crowd around them. Harry smiled sheepishly, leaning into him.

"Not maudlin," he insisted. "Just... relieved."

Draco's gaze narrowed. Then he pressed a kiss to Harry's lips, and a glass in Harry's hand. "Have a drink and stop thinking so much," he insisted. "You've earned it."

Harry knocked back the drink, coughing slightly at the fierce burn of high quality firewhiskey. "Blimey. Where'd that come from?"

"Charlie," Draco told him, smirking and topping up Harry's glass. "He stopped by the dragon reserve to check in with work, and I guess someone over there had a big stash of the good stuff, decided to share."

That explained a lot, actually; from Charlie's stories, dragon tamers were notoriously good at handling their alcohol. Harry looked down at the cup, then turned suspicious eyes on his