

“Oh, not you again!” Tonks’ loud groan made them both look up — she was stood in the doorway, smirking at Charlie. “I thought I got rid of you for good.”

“Shut up, you love me,” Charlie declared, striding across to wrap the auror in a tighter hug than even Ginny had earned. Tonks yelped, shoving him away when he tried to smack an exaggerated kiss to her cheek.

Harry had forgotten the pair were friends; it seemed like a lifetime ago that he’d been first introduced to Tonks at the Quidditch World Cup.

“I hope you get eaten by a dragon,” Tonks said, wiping her cheek with an exaggerated grimace. Charlie barked out a laugh.

“Missed you, too, mate.”

The commotion had drawn the last few members of the household down to the kitchen; Sirius stood in the doorway, Remus at his shoulder, looking both amused and bewildered by the pair’s antics.

“You must be Charlie,” Sirius greeted, holding out a hand. Charlie shook it, blue eyes trailing appraisingly over Sirius.

“And you’re the infamous Sirius Black,” he returned. “Have to say, you look a lot better than you do in those Wanted posters.” His cheeks dimpled in a grin when Sirius laughed.

“I should hope so! Those Azkaban photographers never got my good side.”

Remus introduced himself as well, and the next thing Harry knew they were all being herded to the table, which was groaning under the weight of all the food Mrs Weasley had cooked to celebrate her son’s return.

For once, Harry was entirely overlooked in the kitchen of Grimmauld Place — everyone wanted to know what Charlie had been up to since the First Task, which was the last time he’d been home. The stocky redhead was in fine form, regaling them all with stories of his dragons, and the coworkers he’d left behind in Romania. He sounded sad to have parted from them, but his joy at being back with his family was obvious.

No one even looked Harry’s way, except when Charlie told him the Horntail’s eggs had hatched, and she was more ferocious than ever. “In case you ever fancy round two,” he joked, blue eyes sparkling. Harry snorted.

“I’ll stick to quidditch, thanks,” he replied dryly. Charlie could keep his dragons, thank you very much.

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His return to Hogwarts was so close Harry could almost *taste* it — so close he’d entirely forgotten about booklists, until Ginny knocked on his bedroom door with two envelopes in her hand. “Cutting it a bit close, aren’t they,” she remarked, tearing into her own.