

“Honestly, I’m not really sure,” Harry admitted. “I kinda kept my head down, after everything. I’m sure Professor Snape’s already told you about what Dumbledore said at the leaving feast?” Both adults nodded. “So yeah, there’s that. There’s definitely plenty of people who aren’t convinced by it all. Who knows what they’ll think of it by next year. I need to owl Susan as soon as it’s safe — she said Neville told all the heirs what happened in the graveyard, but I didn’t manage to meet with them before school broke up. Everyone’s still in shock over Cedric, I think.” Harry tried not to think about it too much, though that was hard with the nightmares. If he let the gaping hole in his heart take over, he’d be useless.

“Understandable.” Remus ran a hand through his hair. “It looks like we’re playing a waiting game right now, for the most part.”

“Well I don’t want to twiddle my thumbs while I wait,” Harry insisted. “I want to get as much done as I can this summer.”

Ceri popped into the room to summon them down for lunch, and Remus insisted on no war-talk at the table. Luckily, Harry was distracted by the arrival of Sirius.

“No one’s home,” he assured, rounding the table to squeeze Harry’s shoulders, and then drop down into the seat beside him. Ceri waved her hand, and a fourth plate floated over. “I assume Remus filled you in?”

“You’re living at Order headquarters now,” Harry said, frowning only slightly. “Who else is around there?”

“I’m the only one there full-time,” Sirius explained, talking between mouthfuls of food. “But there’s been Order business every day since Dumbledore claimed the place. Not every meeting holds everyone. And there’s been talk of the whole Weasley family moving in now school’s over. Albus says it’s because their house is too easy to reach, and everyone knows they’re a light-aligned family, but really I’m betting he wants his little puppets nice and close to the action, so they can drip-feed you information without telling you anything important at all.”

“He’s got another thing coming if he thinks Ron and Hermione will tell me so much as the bloody weather these days,” Harry said with a snort. “Has he not figured out that we don’t talk to each other anymore?”

“Ah, but teenage friendships are fickle, and you’ll need all the friends you can get in these trying times,” Sirius replied in his best Albus Dumbledore impression. “You’ll have to watch out for those two. If anyone’s going to make Dumbledore realise you’ve shed your spells, it’s them.”

“No war talk at the table, Sirius,” Remus warned. Sirius rolled his eyes, but obediently continued eating until his plate was empty. Harry quickly followed, wanting to get back to the important stuff as soon as possible.

Once everyone was finished they returned to the living room, Sirius sitting on the sofa beside Harry with his feet tucked up underneath him.