

Harry supposed it was probably the stress of the tournament; he'd only forgotten to eat a few times in the last couple of months. "It's good to see you too, Ceri. Did you cook all this?" There was turkey and stuffing and vegetables, fluffy roast potatoes and a huge boat of gravy, even a plate stacked with pigs in blankets. The elf nodded happily.

"Christmas dinner for masters and family," she announced. "Can I be getting anything else?"

"This all looks fantastic, Ceri," Sirius told her. "Thank you."

Ceri beamed once more, then disappeared, and Sirius nudged Harry towards the table. "Go on, pup. Tuck in! You can tell me all about your game yesterday."

The four of them sat at the table, and there was a minor amount of chaos as they all served themselves, passing dishes around and trying not to spill gravy on anyone. When they all had full plates, Sirius cleared his throat. "I won't get too sappy, or Snape might come out in a rash," he said teasingly, "but for a long time, I never thought I'd have this again. Christmas. Love. Family. Yes, even you, you greasy bat," he added, making Snape scowl. "There should be more people at this table, but the world can be cold at times. So I just wanted to thank all of you, for being the warmth in my life." Sirius swallowed a little thickly. Harry wondered how many glasses of wine he'd had already. "Merry Christmas."

"Merry Christmas," they all murmured in response, even Snape, lifting their glasses to tap together in the centre of the table. Harry had been allowed a small glass of wine, and the taste was foreign; he must have made a face, as Remus chuckled opposite him.

"It takes some getting used to," he said, drinking from his own, much larger glass.

Harry was gently bullied into recounting the seekers' match as they ate, before conversation turned to other things, always managing to come back around to the Yule Ball. Every time Harry tried to ask about what the adults had been up to — any time he tried to get information about Voldemort and Pettigrew — he was gently brushed off and the subject was quickly changed. He appreciated that they didn't want to talk about such serious things at Christmas, but Harry was desperate for information. He hadn't had any more dreams that he could remember, but every now and then he woke up with his scar aching.

"Time for presents!" Sirius declared once they had thoroughly demolished the chocolate yule log cake Ceri brought in. He urged Harry over to the sofa, bounding after him. Remus and Snape followed at a more sedate pace, Remus looking thoroughly amused by Sirius' enthusiasm. Snape just looked resigned to it all, his shoulder gently pressing against Remus' once they sat down. With a wave of Remus' wand, a pile of wrapped gifts came floating over from a corner of the room, settling on the coffee table. Harry reached into his bag, adding the presents for the adults to the stack.

"Right, Harry first!" Sirius said, tossing a present Harry's way.

"No, let's all open them together," Harry insisted, not wanting all of them staring at him while he opened presents. His birthday had been bad enough! "Here, I got these for you guys." He distributed his presents, smiling shyly at Snape's look of surprise.