

Harry's heart twisted painfully. "He still doesn't need to be worrying about Draco on top of all that. After the trial, I'll ask him." There was little point doing anything now, anyway; the trial was tomorrow.

"If you're sure," Charlie said, shrugging.

They drifted together, doing lazy loops around the pitch. "He's scared of leaving you, too, y'know," Harry said abruptly. Charlie raised an eyebrow.

"Pardon?"

"Sirius. He might not say it to you, but I've seen the way he watches you lately." Like Charlie might disappear if he looked away. The same way he watched Harry. "He's scared he might lose you, through this trial."

"He'll have to try harder than that, to shake me," Charlie challenged, smirking. "I'm not worried, Harry, and you shouldn't be either. The evidence is solid. Amelia's got it all under control. Sirius will get free."

Harry wished he could have that sort of confidence.

"The twins have asked me to bring you both round to the shop, after the trial," Charlie continued. "Said something about you needing to inspect your investment." He raised an amused eyebrow. "Care to elaborate?"

Harry told him about giving the twins his Triwizard winnings, and Charlie burst out laughing.

"Merlin, Harry! Never tell Mum, she'll kill you." His smile faltered at that, turning sad.

"Have you... spoken to her, since, y'know?" Harry didn't know the exact details, but he knew Mrs Weasley had blown up when she found out about Charlie and Sirius.

"I tried," Charlie said. "Went over to the house, tried to chat with her. Just ended in an argument. Mum... I know George has told you she's never really agreed with our sexuality. And I know she's gotten at you for it a few times." Harry scowled, nodding. "I think maybe she might've come round if it had been anyone other than Sirius. Some nice Romanian bloke, or maybe a good Gryffindor lad my own age. But... she never liked Sirius, regardless. I think because he was a threat to her — with him around, her and Dad were no longer the only parental figures in your life. And he was just so unashamedly *himself*, unapologetic about everything, she couldn't bear to see it." He grinned, winking at Harry. "I'll confess that's half the reason I started flirting with him, to start with. Just to piss Mum off, if she ever noticed it." He ran a hand through his hair. "Didn't expect to fall arse over teakettle for the bloke."

"He grows on you," Harry agreed fondly. Charlie laughed.

"Doesn't he just." He shook his head, affectionate smile still curling his lips. "Mum will either come around, or she won't. But Dad and the rest of the family don't care. And I've got the approval of you and Remus, so that's the only opinions Sirius gives a shit about. Far as the rest are concerned, he'll probably enjoy the outrage of it all."