

ever happened. Even Fortescue's had reopened. The Ministry, such as it was, was rushed off their feet with the need to contain the festivities and stop the muggles from noticing. It was certainly keeping everyone busy.

It was good, Harry thought, for them to have things to do. Without all that, he dreaded to think of how he'd just be... drifting. Thinking about the deaths of his friends, wondering how they could have been prevented. Parvati had left for India, promising to keep in touch in the last few weeks of summer. Harry hadn't seen Dennis Creevey since the battle, but he knew the boy had gone home with his muggle parents, who had been in one of the Black family safehouses.

Perhaps that was for the best.

But he had found himself with a rare afternoon free; Sirius and Charlie were with Narcissa, taking all the currently displaced muggleborns for Inheritance Testing at Gringotts. Harry had thought about going with them, but he hadn't wanted to overwhelm Nashira and the twins if what they suspected was true. There would be time to meet them properly later.

He and Draco were the only students left permanently in the castle, now. Though due to the entire extended Black family still living there, it wasn't unusual to find visitors in search of one or another of them. Amelia was around regularly, discussing the handover of the DMLE with Kingsley, who still didn't seem to have quite registered that he was going to be a father soon.

Harry was glad for the quiet. He had never been great in crowds, and while at first it was fun having all his loved ones surrounding him and so *joyous* with relief, it had soon become suffocating. The Chamber of Secrets had once again become a necessary refuge, though he did have to put up with Salazar now pestering him to start sorting out journals to 'accidentally' discover and release into the world.

This time he didn't need that kind of solitude, though. He wasn't *hiding*, per say, he was just... enjoying the view from the Astronomy Tower. Neville and Professor Sprout had worked hard to re-grow the grass, and other than a few dips that hadn't been there before, you could hardly tell what had happened. Plans for a flower garden were underway, with rumours of some sort of memorial statue.

Harry wanted absolutely no part in that, but he had warned both McGonagall and Amelia that if the statue was in any way shape or form designed to look like him or his lightning bolt scar, he would turn the castle to rubble.

But it was a nice evening, warm and breezy, the sun reflecting off the mirror-still surface of the lake. He'd not seen the squid since the day after the battle — perhaps it was sleeping off its large meal of troll parts.

"So this is where you wandered off to."

He turned, smiling at Draco as the blond's head popped up through the trap door. "Hey, you." Harry happily shifted over on his stone ledge, making room for Draco to tuck in beside him. The Slytherin straddled the ledge, one leg hanging over the edge, so Harry could lean back