

“Use it well, little brother,” he said mock-solemnly, winking. “We’ll see you in Honeydukes.”

“Thanks, guys.” They both offered him extravagant bows, doffing imaginary top hats.

“Our pleasure, Heir Potter,” they said cheekily, disappearing from the passageway before he could say anything. Harry looked down at the map, blank in his hands. He grinned.

Time to see what Hogsmeade was all about.

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He didn’t look for Ron and Hermione when he slipped out of the Honeydukes cellar, covered by his invisibility cloak. He wasn’t sure if he wanted to tell them about the map, yet. Ron would probably get jealous that the twins gave it to Harry and not him. Instead he just wandered, alone and invisible, thinking fondly of his time back in Diagon Alley. He could sort-of see what the fuss was about, but there wasn’t anything truly remarkable there. He supposed just the freedom to go there without adults was enough.

He took a brief look in the Three Broomsticks, but it was far too crowded for him to sneak around invisible without getting bumped into. Besides, he couldn’t exactly order a butterbeer. He saw Ron and Hermione in there, hands wrapped around their mugs, and smiled softly to himself. They seemed to be having fun.

He looked around the shops for a while, imagining what he might buy if he weren’t hiding under his invisibility cloak. Perhaps he’d come back another time. Some of the things in Honeydukes did look delicious.

He was back in the castle before dinner, writing his Charms essay in the common room when Ron and Hermione returned, none the wiser to his little adventure. They practically ran towards him. Hermione’s eyes were red, like she’d been crying. “We need to talk to you,” Ron said gravely, dragging him over to a secluded corner of the common room. Harry looked at them, bewildered.

Quietly, Hermione explained to him the conversation they’d overheard in the Three Broomsticks, where Fudge and the teachers told Madam Rosmerta about Sirius Black and Peter Pettigrew. Harry scowled before he could help himself — what right did they have to be bandying private information about like that in the middle of the pub? — Then he remembered this was supposed to be brand new information to him, and made himself look horrified. It wasn’t hard; he still was, every time he thought about Black too much.

“I’m sorry, Harry,” Hermione murmured. “We had no idea.”

“Yeah, well, neither did I,” he muttered angrily. “I’m going upstairs.”

He figured it was something the old, impulsive Harry Potter would do, stomping up the dormitory stairs and throwing himself down on his bed. He reached for his trunk, for the photo album Hagrid had given him, flipping it open to the photo of his parents’ wedding. Sirius Black was there, happiness shining in his grey eyes, looking barely older than he had