

“Hell yes,” came Ginny’s immediate response, throwing a strange purple bean at Fred. “Cards?”

The four of them slunk out of the kitchen — noticed by Sirius and Bill, but not stopped — and tiptoed past Mrs Black’s portrait, heading for Harry’s room. There, they shut the door and made themselves comfortable on the floor, Harry pulling a pack of cards out of his satchel where it waited with his clothes for the next day.

“Have to say, mate, I’ll be pleased to see the back of this house,” George remarked, shuffling the cards expertly. Harry made a noise of agreement.

“I wish I wasn’t leaving Sirius behind. But it’ll be great to be back at school with everyone.”

“You missing your *boyfriend*?” Fred cooed, laughing when Harry’s cheeks reddened.

“Hang on, do you two know who it is?” Ginny asked, narrowing her eyes at her twin brothers. The pair shared a look.

“We can neither confirm nor deny,” George said, though he was grinning, which really gave it away in itself. Ginny scowled.

“Not fair.”

“Sorry, Gin. It’s not just my secret to tell,” Harry apologised halfheartedly. There was a lot she knew, but still plenty she didn’t, and Harry wasn’t sure how good her Occlumency was yet. Draco’s safety was too important.

Ginny mock-sniffed. “See if I give you any of the good gossip about my own love life, Potter.”

He made a face that had her kicking him in the shin. “You can definitely keep that gossip to yourself. Even if it’s Neville. *Especially* if it’s Neville.” There were some things he didn’t need to know about his best friend and his pseudo-little sister.

Mention of the other Gryffindor had Ginny blushing, which of course had the twins teasing her relentlessly; first about Neville, but then about some Ravenclaw boy she’d apparently been writing to.

Harry shook his head, still bewildered by the whole situation. They’d sort it out eventually, he hoped.

Obviously the party downstairs was not quite as exciting as intended; one by one, people trailed up to Harry’s room — first Sirius, flushed in the face and starting to edge into melancholy at the thought of them all going to school in the morning. Shortly followed by Bill, complaining about people insisting he got a haircut. Charlie arrived soon after, which of course meant Tonks joined too, and then Remus sniffed them out, looking amused to see so many people crammed into Harry’s bedroom.

“So this is where the real party ended up, is it?” he remarked dryly, snatching the bottle of firewhiskey from Sirius’ hands and necking back a shot. “Molly keeps thinking everyone’s