

*Dear Harry,*

*I hope this reaches you before you leave Hogwarts. I have a few doubts about the owl's reliability, but he's the best I could find.*

*I'm safe. We both are. I won't tell you anything more, just in case, but I'm safe. The dementors are still searching, but they haven't a hope of finding me here. I'm going to let some muggles get a glimpse of me soon, far from Hogwarts. Hopefully they'll lift the security on the castle for next year.*

*Also, I have a confession to make. I sent you the Firebolt, with a little help from Crookshanks. Think of it as twelve birthdays' worth of presents from your godfather.*

*I won't say much more, in case this letter gets into the wrong hands. But know I'm thinking of you, and there's a little Maraudering afoot. You'll know more when the time comes. For now, keep your head down, and your ears sharp.*

*I am enclosing something else for you, which I think will make your next year at Hogwarts more enjoyable.*

*If you ever need me, send word. I love you, pup. I'll write again soon.*

*Sirius.*

*PS - I thought your friend Ron might like to keep this owl, as it's my fault he no longer has a rat.*

Harry hesitated to show the letter to Ron and Hermione, but they were both with him when the letter was delivered, so he couldn't really say no. To his surprise, Ron held the owl up to Crookshanks for inspection before claiming the little creature, wanting to check it wasn't hiding anything.

Harry was overjoyed by the small piece of parchment included in the envelope; signed permission from Sirius for Harry to visit Hogsmeade. That would be good enough for Dumbledore, he hoped.

"What does he mean, there's Maraudering afoot?" Hermione asked, reading the letter carefully. Harry, who hadn't shared the entire history of his father's legacy with his friends, merely shrugged.

"Who knows," he said evasively. He hoped it meant that Lupin had found Sirius, wherever he was.

"Brilliant," Ron declared, staring at his new owl. "Way better than some stupid rat."

Harry laughed, shaking his head. Ron still hadn't completely forgiven Harry and Hermione for going back in time without him. Hopefully the owl would go some way towards soothing his ruffled feathers.

.-.-.