

Chapter 77

In the morning, the *Prophet* was full of stories of Sirius' freedom. The ex-convict delighted in reading them aloud over breakfast, gleefully repeating the parts that shed suspicion on Dumbledore's involvement in the Potters' wills.

"I want to marry Amelia Bones," Sirius declared, and Charlie kicked his shin halfheartedly.

"Oi!" he protested. Sirius just laughed, dancing out of kicking range.

"Come on, can you blame me? The way she just brought out those facts, right in front of the old goat, and managed to make it all part of my own case! Fucking masterful."

"It was brilliant," Charlie agreed. Then he reached out, grabbing Sirius by the wrist and yanking him down into his lap. "But you're not marrying her."

"Make me a better offer," Sirius challenged. Charlie just winked.

"Maybe I will."

"I'm going to leave before I vomit," Snape declared, getting to his feet. Remus laughed.

"Don't forget to come up for lunch," he teased, bidding his partner goodbye.

"So what do you want to do with your first day as a free man, then?" Harry asked, beaming at his godfather.

"Well, now it's all over the paper, I suppose we should see what the public reaction will be," Sirius suggested, still grinning. "Anyone up for a trip to Diagon?"

"You mean we have to be seen in public with you?" Charlie mock-complained. Sirius just laughed, kissing him firmly.

"Get used to it, Weasley," he drawled. "I can go anywhere I want, now! I've got fifteen years of catching up to do!"

"I'll come with you, as long as you stop doing *that*," Harry said, gesturing to the pair of them, and Sirius barked a laugh.

"I suppose it has been a very long time since I witnessed the Public Spectacle of Sirius Black," Remus mused, shaking his head. "But I can't be out too long; I promised Severus I'd go over some adjustments he's making to the Wolfsbane this afternoon."

"You're going to leave me with the lovebirds?" Harry yelped in dismay. Charlie snorted, reaching out to ruffle his hair.

"I'll drop Bill a line, see if he wants to join us," he assured. That perked Harry up, and he finished his breakfast quickly, heading upstairs to get changed for the day.