

hell, Mum; Ginny is going out with *Neville Longbottom* and you're still mad about it!" He ran a hand through his hair, shaking his head incredulously.

"I'm sorry, I didn't mean to burst in here and derail Christmas," he said, grimacing. "But I'm done with letting you pretend you care so much about Harry's wellbeing when really you only care about what Dumbledore's told you."

"There's more to that boy than you realise, Charlie," his mother warned him, voice shaking. "You'll get hurt, if you're not careful."

"I think I know Harry a hell of a lot better than you do, Mum," he retorted.

"So you know he's got You-Know-Who in his head, then?" Ron sneered. "Or has he turned you, as well?"

Charlie just shook his head sadly. "Harry hasn't *turned*, and neither have I," he said simply. "And maybe one day, Ron, you'll grow up enough to understand what real friendship is. It sure as hell isn't reporting your *friend's* every bloody move to people like Dumbledore." In the chair next to Ron, Hermione let out a tiny gasp — had she really thought Harry wouldn't figure it out?

Charlie turned away, squeezing his dad's shoulder. "I'm sorry, Dad. I'll go."

"I'll walk you out."

He didn't say goodbye to the rest — he'd see them soon enough, anyway. So he let his father walk him back to the door, the man looking decades older than he had when Charlie first showed up. "I— how long have you known?" Arthur asked, voice cracking. "About your mother?"

"Harry told me when I saw him before the first task of the Triwizard," Charlie replied honestly. Arthur sucked in a sharp breath.

"You should have come to me, son."

"I couldn't. Harry couldn't. If Dumbledore found out that he knew..." Harry had been far too vulnerable for the truth to come out back then.

His father looked grim. "I've been putting my trust in the wrong man for far too long, haven't I?" he realised. Charlie nodded.

"If it helps, so has everyone else," he said, shrugging. "He's very good at being trustworthy." Charlie had trusted him, too, until Harry showed him the truth.

Arthur gripped Charlie's hand tight for a moment. "Will you give Harry a message for me?" he pleaded, and Charlie nodded. "Tell him... tell him I had no idea, about any of it. I'm so sorry for any harm my family may have done him. If he wants recompense—"

"He doesn't," Charlie assured quickly, knowing his dad didn't have that kind of money, but he'd give it up regardless if Harry asked. "He doesn't care about the money, not really. It's