

public to come forward if they had any information on the incarceration or whereabouts of Sirius Black.

Harry's heart pounded in his chest, and his gaze sought Susan out at the Hufflepuff table. Luckily, she was in her usual seat, and Harry hurried over to her. "Susan!"

"Harry," she greeted, scooting over to make room for him. "You've seen the paper?"

"Susan, I— you saw him, right? Fighting with us, at the Ministry?" he asked quietly, and she nodded. They both knew he wasn't talking about Pettigrew.

"He was on our side, for sure," she confirmed.

"Will you write to your aunt?" he begged. "Tell her I'm willing to testify to whatever jury I need to. And— and tell her to look into my parents' wills, if they had any." It always seemed suspicious to Harry that his parents wouldn't write something in their wills to clarify the Secret Keeper in case of their deaths.

"I will. But you can write to her yourself, if you'd like," Susan pointed out. "I know after what happened the other night, she wants to meet you properly." The red-haired girl grinned. "She told me to invite you over for dinner sometime this summer, if you're willing. Seems she wants to thank the boy who turned her niece into such a *'ruthless little warrior'*."

"I'd be happy to," Harry agreed brightly. "I, uh, don't know what I'm doing this summer, though. I'll get back to you."

"Once your godfather is free, we'll invite you both over," Susan said, and there was so much confidence in her voice Harry couldn't help but hug her.

Sirius could be *free*.

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At Grimmauld Place, Sirius Black was staring at the same newspaper headline, hands clenched tight around the paper, heartbeat a furious drum in his otherwise empty head.

"Sirius, what's the matter?" Charlie asked, yawning. He had stayed the night, and was over at the stove cooking omelettes. He hadn't seen the post arrive.

Sirius made a noise that was halfway between a yelp and a groan, and Charlie looked over. And then dropped the frying pan with a clatter. "Holy fuck." He hurried over, one warm hand on Sirius' shoulder as he leant over him to read the headline. Sirius still couldn't think, not really, but he focused on that hand, that grounding pressure, until finally he could breathe normally again.

"They got Pettigrew," he breathed, wide-eyed in astonishment. He craned his neck, meeting Charlie's gaze. "They've caught Pettigrew. They... they're looking into my trial."

"And Kingsley's on it, so you know he won't let the rat escape," Charlie added. His thumb began to stroke the curve of Sirius' neck, his dimples out in full force as he smiled brightly.