

The pair nodded eagerly, disappearing, and Harry headed straight for the largest room in the house.

The occupants gathered quickly, wary as they looked at Harry, hope creeping into their eyes at the smile on his face. He stood at the head of the room, waiting patiently until what looked like everyone was inside. It had to be at least seventy people — Merlin, he hadn't realised they'd crammed so many in!

"I'm guessing some of you have seen the *Prophet* this morning," he began, watching several sets of shoulders grow tense. "It's real. Lord Voldemort is dead; I killed him myself. The war is won."

A collective intake of breath, followed by a few murmured prayers. "All of you are free to go, if you wish. I'm going to give the Fidelius another week before I end it, just to give you all time to sort yourselves out. If you need to stay a little longer — if your home isn't in the same state you left it — that's absolutely fine. Take as long as you need to get back on your feet. There's no rush." He didn't want anyone to feel like he was kicking them out.

"It's the truth?" someone gasped, stunned. "It... it's finally over?"

Harry nodded. "We can't guarantee there isn't a Death Eater or two lying low somewhere, but we got all the ones who turned up at Hogwarts to fight. And we're working on straightening out the Ministry." Between Amelia and Kingsley, Harry was sure things would soon be put to rights, the staff thoroughly vetted — both for undercover Death Eaters, and for those just so corrupt and heartless that they aided the Dark for their own gain.

"What about us?" The small voice of Nashira, calling out clearly over the muttering. She was stood with her twin siblings and a huddle of other kids; all underage, and all with parents either missing or dead.

"Kingsley Shacklebolt is liaising with the muggle government to try and track down families of muggleborns who might have gone into hiding without using magic," Harry told the kids. "I'll be honest — we don't know how long it's going to take. But we're doing the best we can. If any of you have friends or cousins or other people you'd like to go and stay with, we can work out getting in touch with them. But all of you are welcome to stick around for the summer." Most of them would be going back to Hogwarts in September, now it was safe. Those who were too young even for that... by September, they would have figured out the guardianship situation. He hoped.

By the looks on their faces, Harry could see that at least the older children understood that there was a very high chance their parents wouldn't be found. Kingsley had said the muggles were pretty good at keeping track of deaths, especially those that had happened under suspicious circumstances in the last eighteen months — hopefully they could provide closure, if nothing else.

"We're in your debt, Mr Potter," Mr Pershore declared solemnly, squeezing through to the front of the crowd and dropping to one knee, holding his wand up in supplication. "If you need anything of the Pershore family, anything at all, it would be an honour to aid you."