

Chapter 62

Whoever's bright idea it had been to get the Knight Bus back to school, Harry wanted to hex them. Why they couldn't just get the train like all the other students he had no idea; just because they'd left under unusual circumstances, didn't mean they had to return in them.

But thankfully, none of them lost their breakfast — which was more than Harry could say for some other passengers of the bus — and with Tonks and Remus chaperoning, they all made it back to school in one piece. Harry hugged Remus tightly at the school gates.

"Stay out of trouble," Remus said, and Harry laughed.

"Funny joke, Moony," he teased, making the werewolf roll his eyes.

"Stay out of *excessive* trouble."

That still seemed like a tall order for Harry, but he didn't argue, allowing Tonks to bundle him in a hug and ruffle his hair. "See you, kid," she said cheerily. "Have a good term. Give old Umbridge hell for me."

"I'll do my best," Harry replied. "See you in summer!" Unless something drastic happened, he wouldn't be leaving the castle for Easter break. He had far too much studying to do for that.

The five of them traipsed up towards the castle, dread falling on them like a curtain as the imposing building came into view. "Let's see what the damage is, then, boys and girls," Fred sighed, pushing open the doors.

Luckily, they avoided just about everyone up until they reached Gryffindor Tower. And there, the only people who were curious about why they had left were those who were just happy to see them back. Fred dipped Angelina in a showy, overdramatic kiss in the middle of the common room, while George mimed retching behind them both.

"Alright, Harry. Ginny," Neville greeted, waving cheerily. Harry glanced at Ginny, wondering if she'd written Neville that letter, or was planning on doing it in person. From the wooden smile on her face, Harry was betting the latter.

"Hey, Nev. How was the rest of your holidays?"

"Yeah, great. Hey, look — Gran got me a new wand!" The blond boy showed it off eagerly. "She said with the way things were going at school, I might end up in a fight, and she didn't want me to damage Dad's." Not quite what Harry had said to her, but the result was the same. At last, Neville had a wand suited to his magic.

As much as Harry wanted to grab his cloak and map and hunt down Draco, he had missed his friends — and he didn't want to be suspicious. So he happily let Neville regale him with the goings on of his greenhouse at home; and then, when she arrived, of Parvati's Christmas in