

The morning of Harry's fourteenth birthday dawned clear and sunny, and Harry was awoken by several owls tapping against his window. The most violent of which was the tiny ball of fluff Sirius had given Ron — who, according to the letter, was named Pig, which, *what??*

He'd stayed up until midnight, as he always did, wishing himself a happy birthday when the clock turned over. But for the first time ever, he fell asleep quickly after, eager to celebrate his birthday properly. For the first time ever, he had people to celebrate it with.

He had presents from all the usual people — The Weasleys, Ron, Hermione, Hagrid — but to his surprise he also had presents from the twins, Neville, Susan and Hannah, and cards from Daphne, Blaise, Ernie, Anthony, Sullivan, the Patil twins, and even Cassius Warrington. He'd never felt so popular in his life.

There was nothing in the pile from Draco, and Harry tried to ignore the stab of hurt that rose in his chest. Perhaps the owl was just delayed. Draco was still in France, after all.

His bedroom door burst open, and Padfoot bounced onto the bed, sending Harry's presents flying. "Padfoot!" he exclaimed laughingly, shoving gently at the huge dog. "You've made a mess."

"That's what magic's for!" Sirius replied, human once more and sitting on Harry's bed, beaming. "Happy birthday, Harry!" He opened his arms, and Harry wriggled over for a hug.

"Happy birthday, cub," Remus called from the door, watching the scene with fond eyes. "Sirius, let him up, will you? Breakfast is ready. Ceri made pancakes."

At that announcement, Harry abandoned his godfather and practically sprinted to the kitchen, skidding into the table and taking his seat. "Happy birthday, Master Harry!" Ceri chirped. "Ceri be making your favourite!" She placed a plate in front of him, stacked high with pancakes, loaded with homemade whipped cream and fresh berries.

"Thanks, Ceri!" he enthused, reaching for his knife and fork.

"Couldn't wait for the rest of us?" Sirius mock-complained, when he entered the kitchen to find Harry with his cheeks bulging full of food.

"It's *pancakes*, Pads," he implored once he'd swallowed.

For once, Snape was the last one to the table, and he nodded at Harry in greeting. "Happy birthday, Potter."

Harry grinned at him, making sure his mouth wasn't full of pancake. Snape still looked mildly disgusted.

"So what are we doing today?"

"Well, you've got your Potions lesson this morning, and—" Sirius broke off in a laugh at the offended look on Harry's face. "Kidding, kidding. You've got presents in the living room, and then a little surprise at about ten."