

Draco's brow furrowed. "How odd," he mused, then shrugged. "Well, I'm glad you have it back. I know how much it means to you." He leaned in, pecking Harry's cheek. "Go on, go take a minute to clean up. Sirius will have an aneurism if we don't leave soon." They were trusting Essie and Tinker to make sure that all four of the children were packed and ready to go in time. Once they left, the Pottery would be empty again.

For now.

Sure enough, Sirius was bouncing up and down when Harry made it downstairs. Snape looked only mildly murderous — but then he'd been in a good mood since the night before, understandably.

The students were going to *shit themselves* if Snape dared smile at the Welcoming Feast.

"Let's go, let's go!" Sirius hassled, making Harry roll his eyes and jump the last three stairs.

"I'm coming! Keep your hair on!"

Ceri hurried in from the kitchen, holding a stack of metal sandwich boxes. "Ceri has made lunches for young masters and mistress' train journey!" She handed one each to Harry and Draco, and the last two to Charlie.

Harry grinned. "Brilliant, thanks Ceri. We'll see you at Christmas." Ceri would, of course, be moving to Grimmauld with the family. At this point Harry wasn't sure any of them could find their own arses with two hands and a map without the little house elf.

Ceri bobbed her head in thanks, then fixed the two boys with a stern look. "Young masters is staying out of trouble this year," she declared — a statement, not a question. Sirius let out a cough that sounded an awful lot like a laugh.

"We'll try our best, Ceri," Harry promised sincerely. She eyed him a little longer, then nodded, satisfied.

"Ceri is going to the other house to wait for masters and little master and mistress." She was overjoyed at the idea of having a couple of younger kids to take care of.

"Perfect, we'll see you there," Charlie said. "Let's get moving."

All together, the seven of them left the house, Harry taking one last look at the first place he had ever experienced true freedom, and they headed for the edge of the wards.

"What's happening with Buckbeak?" Harry asked suddenly, glancing back at the hippogriff sunning himself in the grass. Surely they weren't leaving him there all alone, for the whole year?

"Oh, I'm gonna take him back to Hagrid once I get the chance," Sirius assured. "Think it's been enough time that he's no longer a fugitive."

Harry snorted. "Even if he is, I have an in with the Minister," he joked.