

with the presents for Remus and Sirius — he stowed them in his bag and tugged on his shoes, swinging his invisibility cloak over his shoulders.

The hallways were full of people on the way down to the dungeons, but Harry was a pro at avoiding everyone by now, bobbing and weaving through the students without any of them noticing him. He made it to the empty corridor that held the portrait entrance to Snape's quarters, and knocked. The door opened just wide enough to admit Harry, and once he was inside he took off the invisibility cloak, turning to face the room at large. His jaw dropped, before a huge grin overtook his features. "Sirius!"

His godfather was sat on Snape's sofa, and he got to his feet when Harry appeared, beaming. "Hey, pup! Merry Christmas!" Harry raced across the room and threw himself into the man's arms, a little embarrassed by how happy he was to see Sirius. Summer had been *so long ago*. Sirius kissed his hair, holding him tight. Suddenly, Harry pulled back.

"Is it safe?" he asked, brow furrowing in worry. "What if Dumbledore finds out?"

"Relax, cub," Remus said from the small kitchen area, where he was pouring a glass of wine. "Dumbledore still doesn't even know that I've been visiting all term; he isn't going to know Sirius is here. It's safe." Wine in hand, he walked over to wind an arm around Harry's shoulders, squeezing him affectionately. "Merry Christmas. I heard you had quite the quidditch match yesterday."

"Who told you?"

"I was decorating the steps of the Entrance Hall under Dumbledore's orders," Snape supplied. "There was a surprisingly good view of the grounds."

It made Harry smile all the wider to think that Snape had been watching him fly, and then told Remus about it.

"I can't believe you beat Viktor Krum!" Sirius enthused, ruffling Harry's hair. "Amazing, pup!"

Harry blushed, almost saying something about Viktor's insistence he go pro after graduation. It was too early to start making career choices — especially with the way his future was looking. Once there was no longer a Dark Lord out for his blood, or a headmaster trying to manipulate him, then maybe he could think about playing professional quidditch.

"So how have you been, Padfoot? What are you doing here?"

"I'm here to see you, you twit," Sirius replied with a roll of his eyes. "It's Christmas! Moony managed to persuade Severus to allow a minor Gryffindor invasion for the occasion." He wiggled his eyebrows, winking at the pair. "He has to stay and chaperone the ball tomorrow, and we figured you'd be busy, so we thought we'd celebrate a day early. Is that alright?"

There was a quiet pop, and Snape's small dining table was suddenly loaded down with food, Ceri stood beside it with a bright grin on her wrinkled face. "Master Harry, sir!" she greeted. "It is good to be seeings you well. You is gettings skinny again," she added, eyeing him over.