

They all looked at each other, and burst out laughing as one.

“What the fuck does that even look like?” Pansy exclaimed, shaking her head.

“I think you’re pushing your luck, there,” Hannah agreed. “We’ve still got the trouble-magnet over there, after all.”

“Hey!” Harry protested indignantly. “Not all of it has been my fault!”

“Just most of it,” Parvati piped up, quiet but managing a shaky smile. She and Lavender had disappeared for a while, taking some quiet time to mourn Padma on this final train journey, but now they were back and trying their best to keep their spirits up.

It would be hard, in so many different ways. But they’d manage.

When the train pulled into Hogsmeade station, none of them moved at first. Finally, Harry shifted from his position half-squishing Draco against the window, rising to his feet. “Let’s get going,” he declared, forcing a rakish grin. “McGonagall will kill us all if we’re late to the feast.”

That sparked them into motion, resizing their trunks for the elves to move and squeezing their way out of the train. As always, Hagrid towered over all of them with his lantern in hand, and he waved happily at Harry between his calls for first years. Susan and Harry hung back a while, making sure that all the students got off the train and into the carriages, that no poor firsties got left behind when Hagrid set off to the boats.

Stood patiently waiting for them by the last two carriages were Draco and Theo, along with Daphne, Ginny, Neville, Luna and Hannah.

Harry was torn, but he knew what he needed to do.

“Go with the others,” he told Draco, kissing him softly. “I need to do this with them.”

Draco, because he was the most wonderful person in the world, understood completely. “Come find me after the feast,” he requested, and Harry grinned.

“I can slip through the walls, my love,” he pointed out, “I can steal you away in the night.”

Draco’s eyes sparkled, and he couldn’t resist one more kiss. “I like the sound of that,” he agreed.

They parted ways; Draco heading with Theo and the three girls for one carriage, while Harry turned to his fellow heirs in the very last one. “Shall we?”

Hannah got situated first, levitating her wheelchair up and adjusting the carriage bench to suit. Then the other three piled in beside her. As the carriage began to roll, they joined hands, all four of them, waiting for the moment they crossed the wards.

They saw it before they felt it. Looming on the horizon, twinkling with the light from a hundred different windows, Hogwarts castle stood tall and proud and utterly unchanged by