

— if not for the shadows in his eyes and the tension in his shoulders, you'd never guess.

Indeed, all four of them were looking miles healthier than they had this time last year. Harry had caught Snape grumbling about needing to buy new trousers thanks to Ceri's cooking, and Remus teasing him that he was no longer two-dimensional. As for the werewolf himself, between his peace with his inner wolf and the training he was helping Harry with, he was broader in the shoulders and hiding some impressive muscles beneath his cardigans and mild-mannered smile.

Harry was just glad Snape had stopped leaving Nutrient potions in pointedly innocent places for him to find. He knew he would never be as tall or stocky as his father, not after his childhood, but the Potions Master's expertise had corrected far more than Harry had ever thought possible. He actually looked his age, now!

So caught up in his introspection of how far they'd come in a year, Harry almost missed the crack of apparition signalling the arrival of their guests. He and Padfoot both turned their heads towards the noise, the dog dropping his toy and transforming back to a man in an instant — not quite quick enough to hide what he'd been doing from his smirking cousin.

"I always wanted a dog when we were children," she teased by way of greeting, leaning in to kiss Sirius' cheek. "Seren Du is treating you well, cousin. I'm glad to see it."

"You're always welcome to come share the benefits," Sirius replied, grey eyes scanning the woman in concern. "Pardon my saying so, but you look like you could use it." Indeed, Narcissa Malfoy was as perfectly presented as always, but she hadn't bothered to glamour over the dark circles below her eyes, and she seemed a little thinner in the cheeks. Harry felt a small spark of pride to see the dragon necklace he'd bought her sitting at her throat.

"My lord husband is putting my hosting skills to the test this summer," she said primly. "I can't say I approve of his choice of houseguests."

Beside her, Draco flinched minutely. Harry reached for him, not even hesitating to pull him into a chaste kiss despite their audience. "I'm glad you're okay," he murmured, hugging the blond tightly. He felt Draco's shoulders slump, the taller boy relaxing against him for just a second.

"You, too. Happy birthday."

Narcissa squeezed Harry's shoulder, smiling fondly at the pair. "Many happy returns, Harry, darling. I'm glad we were able to get away for the day — though I think Draco might've run away and come here by himself regardless."

Her son blushed, and Harry grinned.

"Why don't you boys go hit the quidditch pitch for a little while?" Sirius suggested. His gaze kept returning to Narcissa, his worry obvious. Harry figured he probably wanted to talk to her privately.