

“He told me he was trying out, I didn’t realise he got the spot. That’s brilliant!” He made a mental note to send a letter to congratulate him. “Might have to start supporting Puddlemere, now.”

Charlie snickered. “I dunno, at least let him make the main team first. Can’t have it going to his head too quickly,” he said with a wink.

They tuned into the conversation opposite them, where Mrs Weasley seemed to be fixated on Bill’s earring. “And your hair’s getting silly again,” she continued, fussing over the ponytail with a frown. “If you’d just let me give it a trim.”

“I like it,” Harry blurted. Immediately, he went bright red. “I mean, I think it looks cool.”

“Yeah, it’s nice. You’re so old-fashioned, Mum,” Ginny piped up from Bill’s other side. Bill looked across at Harry and winked. Harry almost dropped his fork in his lap.

Down at the other end of the table, Ron and the twins were discussing the upcoming quidditch match. Ron started to regale Harry with a blow-by-blow of the previous cup matches, but Harry assured him he’d been listening on his Wireless to keep up with the scores. Ron looked a little put-out, but carried on arguing Bulgaria’s chances with George, even when Charlie chimed in to point out how talented Ireland’s chasers were. Hermione leaned in towards Harry, ducking her head.

“Have you heard from, y’know?” she asked pointedly. It took him a minute to realise she was talking about Sirius. He stifled a smirk; if only she knew.

“Yeah. He’s good, he’s found somewhere safe to hide out.” Somewhere amazing, somewhere Harry already missed desperately.

Not that it wasn’t nice, being back at the Burrow, surrounded by his friends again and excited for the quidditch match. The chaos was *very* different to mealtimes at Seren Du, where it was mostly quiet conversation unless Sirius was in a particularly mischievous mood and then all of them were having to watch out for any number of bizarre spells on their food or cutlery.

Dinner faded into dessert, which faded into sitting in the garden having companionable conversation until the sun began to set, at which time Mrs Weasley stood up and began to stack dishes. “Oh, look at the time! You had all best go to bed, you’ve got an early start tomorrow! Harry, dear, I’m headed to Diagon Alley tomorrow to get everyone’s school things, if you want to leave your list out tonight. There might not be time after the cup; the match went on for five days last time!”

Harry faltered, rushing to think of a quick excuse. “Oh, I already got my school things, Mrs Weasley,” he said. “The Dursleys had a meeting in London a couple of weeks ago and they dropped me off. I didn’t know you’d be coming to get me, and I didn’t want to run out of time.” That sounded reasonable enough. She didn’t know the Dursleys well enough to know that they never, in a million years, would have willingly given Harry a ride to London to buy magic supplies. Ron and Hermione shot him odd looks, but luckily didn’t say anything.