

out how the muggles treated you, everything's just sort of piled on top of that."

Harry frowned. "None of that matters anymore, though. I'm done with the Dursleys. It wasn't your dad's fault." Sure, maybe at the time Harry might have raged at the whole Order guard who said nothing about a teenage boy not leaving his house once in an entire month, but even by then he knew not to expect anything. Dumbledore had them all too tightly wound in his web.

He couldn't let grudges like that linger, or they'd eat him alive.

Speaking of grudges — the pub door opened, and Ron and Hermione walked in, holding hands. Harry saw the moment their eyes landed on the large gathering; Ron froze, turning as if to leave, but Hermione tugged on his arm and took him over to a small table on the other side of the room.

Harry felt the same way about them, to a certain degree — they had been kids, manipulated by Albus Dumbledore. But they also should have had enough sense to know that being asked to stay friends with someone, to report back on their movements and keep them in with the *right* crowd was not normal, not something they should have been completely okay with.

Things would have been different, if they'd apologised for it and tried to work past everything. But instead the pair had doubled down, insisting they were in the right and Harry *needed them*, that none of Harry's other friends were good enough.

He wouldn't ever be their friends, wouldn't ever like them. But he was far too tired to hate them as much as they were determined to continue hating him. He preferred to just forget they existed.

"I'll talk to your dad over the summer, if I can," he said, turning back to George, who had followed his gaze to his youngest brother with an almost disappointed look on his face.

"I think he'd like that. I know he's trying to get Mum to be a bit more rational; I think he's starting with the easy stuff, really. Talking to Bill and Fleur about wedding stuff. Having me and Fred and Angie over for dinner. She even asked me about Blaise, once." He smirked. "Don't think he's worked her up to talking to Charlie and Sirius, though."

"Charlie hasn't told her about the kids, then?" Harry presumed. He'd heard all about the kids at Grimmauld from Sirius, knew how taken with the three siblings his godfather and Charlie were. Harry remembered Nashira Forrester, if only vaguely — he didn't interact much with the younger years, but he remembered her being one of the few Gryffindor first years in his fourth that hadn't gaped in either awe or horror at the sight of him. That was always nice.

George snickered. "Merlin, no. You've heard the story, then?"

"From Padfoot." Harry raised an eyebrow. "You really think they might be related to you?"

"I'd put money on it, honestly," George said. "But even if they're not, those two are hooked. The kids love them just as much — those twins think Sirius is even cooler than me and Fred! It's insulting, quite frankly." He winked. "You ready to be a big brother, then?"