

“I’ve been helping Madam Bones,” he explained, fiddling anxiously with his glasses. “Going through paperwork to make sure everything can be processed properly once the Ministry is accessible again. She, ah, invited me along.”

“And then she told me so I could make sure he actually came,” Bill joked, ruffling Harry’s hair in greeting. “Wasn’t going to let him spend New Year’s alone in his flat.”

Percy blushed.

“We’ve got all the Weasleys together again!” Fred declared, appearing out of nowhere on Harry’s left, while George popped up on his right. “Well, all the good ones, anyway.”

“Except Dad. Couldn’t sneak him out,” George added. “Mum’s been on a bit of a warpath since Charlie dropped the bomb at Christmas.”

Mr Weasley had written to Harry as promised, apologising endlessly for his wife’s actions — and for Ron’s, as evidently Bill and the twins had explained to the man that his son had been spying on Harry for Dumbledore. Harry didn’t blame him; he was so busy working to support his family, it was easily missed.

He wasn’t sure how Dumbledore was going to take it all, but quite frankly at this point that was fairly low on Harry’s list of worries. Lately everything Dumbledore did to try and get back at Harry only made the headmaster look more senile in the eyes of the students — students who would write back to their parents about how odd the headmaster was acting these days.

The crowd for the party wasn’t quite as large as it had been for Harry’s birthday, nor as energetic; they were all just here to spend some time together outside of the castle’s oppressive atmosphere, be with their loved ones all together before they were separated once more. George and Blaise were practically attached at the hip, commiserating with Cassius and Oliver about how much it sucked to have one of them stuck in school while the other was graduated.

It was nice, catching up with people he hadn’t seen in a while. The bubble of Seren Du was wonderful, but it could feel a little isolated after a while, when he was hardly able to leave. The last few years of having Christmas at Hogwarts or Grimmauld, he was used to the holiday involving all sorts of people stopping in.

And as much as he loved Draco, it was great to spend time with people his own age who *weren’t* Draco.

And as midnight drew nearer, they moved out to the patio drenched in Warming charms, ready for the fireworks show the twins had put together. Harry bet they made a killing in fireworks this time of year.

He slipped his arm around Draco’s waist, a glass of champagne in his other hand. “I’ve never had someone to kiss at midnight on New Year’s before,” he remarked, grinning — the one time they might have come close, in fourth year, there were far too many people around for them to sneak away and kiss as the clock struck twelve.