

Chapter 44

When Harry entered the kitchen the next morning, an awkward hush descended over the gathered occupants. He stifled a grimace, though a glimmer of satisfaction rose within him. Good; let them feel guilty after his outburst the night before. They deserved it.

He almost made a beeline towards Remus — at Seren Du, the morning often began with the werewolf handing him a cup of tea and ruffling his hair, telling him the training plan for that day while Harry let the caffeine drag him into wakefulness. But he couldn't do that here; not only would there be no training, but as far as most of the people in the room were concerned, Harry had barely interacted with Remus since the man had left his teaching post.

Luckily, Sirius was stood by the kettle, and offered up a steaming mug with a half-smile. "Morning, pup," he greeted.

"Sit down, Harry dear — eat up! You must be starving!" Mrs Weasley insisted, then froze at her choice of words. "Do you want bacon or sausages? Or both! I'll put both on; growing boys need their protein!" Her slightly-too-high voice made Harry wince.

She put the plate at the empty setting beside Ron, and once again Harry moved it over to sit by the twins instead. Mrs Weasley pursed her lips at that, but didn't say anything.

Harry wondered how long everyone was going to be walking on eggshells around him, after last night. Maybe if he was lucky, he could have them keeping their distance until school started up.

"Did you sleep alright, Harry?" Remus asked, a knowing glint in his eyes. Harry shrugged.

"Well enough." He gave the man a weighted look; no nightmares. Something in Remus' shoulders relaxed.

"Glad to hear my old posters didn't scare you off," Sirius joked. Harry snickered.

"I'm just glad they don't move," he replied dryly.

"There's still the other bed in my room, mate," Ron piped up around a mouthful of fried egg.

"No, thanks. I'm fine where I am," Harry assured evenly.

The awkward silence continued; no one really seemed to know what to say, whether to Harry or to anyone else. Eventually it was broken by Ron's eyebrows suddenly turning bright pink, growing out rapidly until they were two enormous bushy caterpillars on his face, taking up most of his forehead. The twins smirked and high-fived each other, and Harry burst out laughing.

"Oi!" Ron slapped a hand up to his face, feeling the overlarge brows with a wide-eyed look of panic. Mrs Weasley glared at the twins.