

be possible anymore. I hadn't accounted for this."

Sirius snorted under his breath; none of them had accounted for the way those two boys looked at each other with stars in their eyes.

"It's too early to tell, yet," Narcissa continued. "But I'll make sure there are arrangements in place for any future... inevitabilities. And I'll keep your offer in mind. Thank you, cousin."

"Whatever comes to pass, I think it's clear we're all in it together, now," Sirius replied.

Between those two teenagers sat oblivious in front of the fire, all four of the adults in the room would give their lives in a heartbeat for one or the other. And, while Sirius knew it was too soon to tell — teenage crushes came and went like clothing trends — if Harry was anything like his parents, he had a sneaking suspicion he and Narcissa were going to end up even closer family than they were now. Eventually.

If Harry could ever get his head out of his arse and realise what was in front of him.

Ah, young love.

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When Pig arrived with a letter from Ron in the second week in August, reality came crashing back down on Harry uncomfortably quickly. He stared at it for a long moment, a tightness in his chest that it took him a minute to realise was anxiety.

Why did he feel so anxious about seeing his best friends again?

Since Draco had visited on his birthday, it had gone back to just being himself and the three adults. He'd mentioned briefly to Sirius that he had other friends who were somewhat in the know, like Neville, who could maybe visit, but Sirius had gently put his foot down.

"I told you when you got here this house has always been for family, not visitors," he had said with an apologetic half-smile. "I understand wanting to have your friends over, but the fewer people who know about this place, the better. Narcissa and Draco are family, as astonished as I am to be saying that and actually meaning it. They're Blacks, they deserve to be here. But no one else, pup. Not here."

Harry understood, and truthfully he liked it better that way. Seren Du was a little bubble of paradise — the rest of the world didn't exist unless they sought it out. All of them seemed to be benefiting from the break; even Snape, though he'd been acting a little weird lately, was like a completely different man. Harry didn't know if the professor was always like that in private, or if it was Remus' influence, but he was pretty sure the house had something to do with it.

All the same, he should've been excited to go to the Burrow. And to the Quidditch World Cup! And yet... if Ron hadn't made it clear in his letter that he wasn't taking no for an answer, Harry might have turned him down.