

“There’s a creature shop over there,” Harry replied, pointing to the Magical Menagerie. He’d spent quite a bit of time in there, talking to the snakes.

“Perfect. I want to get something for Scabbers, too. He’s been off since Egypt,” Ron added, patting the lump in his front pocket. They all got to their feet, Harry helping Hermione with some of her many books.

“Are those new boots, Harry?” Hermione asked, making him glance down and realise he was wearing the dragonhide boots from Silverling’s. He grimaced, hoping Ron didn’t notice.

“Yeah. I got a bit bored around here, did some shopping. Dudley’s shoes are never gonna fit me.”

“They’re very nice,” she complimented. Luckily, Ron was already on his way to the menagerie.

“Are you two coming or not?” he called impatiently. Harry and Hermione hurried to follow, Hermione’s books banging into their knees.

Perhaps Harry would buy her a bag from Twilfitt and Tattings for Christmas.

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They returned to the Leaky Cauldron with Ron’s rat tonic and Hermione’s new cat — or maybe small tiger, Harry wasn’t sure — and both Ron and Hermione in foul moods. Harry was already thinking longingly of his solitary days gone past. Of course, the rest of the Weasley family were there when they arrived, and Harry was sucked into the chaos like he’d never left. It was good to see them again, but it was all a bit much after so long by himself.

Harry was glad to head back to his room after dinner, sleepy from both the food and the social interaction. He could hear the muffled sounds of Ron and Percy finishing their packing next door, and just as he went to unbuckle his boots, his door swung open. Fred and George slipped in, quickly shutting it behind them. “Hiya, Harry, old chap. Don’t mind if we hang out in here for a minute, do you?” Fred asked, sitting on the bed beside him while George took the other side.

“What’ve you done?” Harry asked flatly. Both twins put a hand to their heart as if struck.

“Us? Do something? *Never*,” they said in unison.

“You’re not going anywhere til I’ve found my badge!” Percy’s indignant voice drifted through from next door. The twins shared a look, and Harry raised an eyebrow.

“...We might’ve stolen Percy’s Head Boy badge,” George admitted.

“But we’ve been improving it,” Fred added, rummaging in his pocket. “Look!” He showed Harry the red and gold badge, which now read ‘Bighead Boy’. Harry snorted.

“He’s gonna kill you,” he remarked, but didn’t toss the twins out.