

Even though reading the *Prophet* was often an exercise in extreme restraint of one's temper, a copy still arrived at Seren Du every morning. On the morning of January second, the front page declared that *Riots Against Ministry In Rochester* had occurred the night before.

Riots against the Ministry meaning that people had actually defended themselves against Death Eaters. Harry furrowed his brow at the paper, reading what he could while Snape held it. "What's all that about?" he asked, gesturing to the article. Snape lowered the paper to peer at him, smirking.

"It seems the Dark Lord's minions met their match in their attempted raid last night," he drawled. "The public are teaching themselves to fight back."

"Tonks was telling me about that, at the Longbottoms'," Sirius piped up. "Said something about a bunch of just-graduated Hufflepuffs running a sort of defence tuition business. A pay-what-you-can type deal, all hush-hush of course. But they're going around teaching people the basics — Disarming, Stunning, snapping wands. Tonks said they're telling people you taught them everything they know," he added, glancing to Harry. "I meant to ask you about it, but I forgot. You know anything about it?"

"Hufflepuffs, Tonks said?" he clarified, gaining a nod. A slow grin crossed Harry's lips. "That'll be Patrick and the guys, then. Cho said they'd gone into business together on something. They're Cedric's dorm mates," he explained, smile faltering at the memory of his Hufflepuff friend. "They were in the HA last year. I guess I made a bit of an impression." He shook his head, amazed. "That's brilliant!" It was perfect — he'd often despaired in the HA about how many average magic users had no idea how to defend themselves in a fight. Clearly, the Hufflepuff boys had been listening.

He hoped they reached more people. He hoped they kept themselves safe.

"Doesn't take much to undo fifty years of shoddy Defence education," Remus remarked ruefully, giving Harry a grin.

"Maybe the Death Eaters will think twice about going after magical families if this is what they get from it." Of course, that just meant more attacks on muggles, but those were harder — even Voldemort didn't want to expose the magical world, so he had to be careful where he chose. If his options were so limited, he would struggle to do much real damage at all.

"Between those lads and the twins' Defence Range, maybe he will indeed," Sirius agreed.

They could only hope.

.-.-.

The first few days of January flew by, and before Harry knew it they were facing their final day at Seren Du before heading back to Hogwarts. It was also the most horrendous weather outside, like nature itself understood Harry's feelings about returning to the castle.

There was another full family dinner planned for the evening as one last farewell, but until then the boys were mostly left to their own devices. And, with quidditch off the agenda, that