

## Chapter 4

Sirius, Harry, and the Tonks quickly settled into their new lives in America. Within days, Remus had shown up on their doorstep after receiving a letter from Sirius. The reunion had been tearful, with apologies on both sides. With nothing left for him in England, Remus moved to America. He found a small house just a few miles away and, after discovering that American wizards weren't as prejudiced against Werewolves, found work on the magical side of the local post office.

Meanwhile, Sirius took an offer to join the M.F.B.I., often referred to as the men in black. Ted set about learning American law as fast as he could. Within months, he'd passed the bar and started a law firm. While he'd intended to only take work as a criminal defense attorney, the small town they now lived in forced him to branch out into almost every aspect of the law, from personal injury to legal contracts. Andi, on the other hand, stayed at home watching the kids.

Harry and Nymphadora were attached at the hip. If she wasn't carrying him around the house, he was toddling after her as fast as his legs could carry him. He'd even taken to climbing out of his crib at night and sneaking into Nymphadora's bed, where the four-year-old cuddled him like a teddy bear.

While the family settled into their new lives, the British Ministry was notified, in front of the ICW, that Sirius Black and Harry Potter had been located and granted asylum in America. Of course, there had been quite the argument, followed by pointless threats from both sides. In the end, international law was clear on the matter, and there was nothing Britain could do to get them back.

For Sirius and Andi, the most surprising part was how quickly Dumbledore gave up the fight. He made a token effort at best and seemed content to let them stay in America. They talked about sending him a letter or arranging a meeting to hopefully find out why Voldemort was so set on getting to Harry, but in the end, they decided against it. If he hadn't told them before, he was unlikely to do so now. That, and the old man had a way of getting you to say more than you intended. In all likelihood, Dumbledore would gain far more from the exchange than they would.

Less than a year after their move, it was time for Nymphadora to go to school. While Ilvermorny was America's most prominent school, it was far from the only one. Unlike Britain, where magical children were either homeschooled or sent to Muggle schools, America had a dedicated magical school in every state. By law, from the ages of five to fourteen – when they could enroll at Ilvermorny – magical children were required to attend.

While America was less prejudiced against other magicals, they were much more stringent about hiding from Muggles. Magical children were taught from a young age how the Muggle world operated, how to blend in, and what laws they needed to know. Sending them to a school for magicals also let them make friends their age without worrying about them letting the secret of magic slip.

On a hot August morning, Tonks waited to be picked up for school while little Harry clutched her hand in a death grip.

"You know he's going to be heartbroken when he can't go with her," Ted whispered.

Andi sighed, "I know, but he'll just have to get used to it. In three years, he'll be able to go with her."

"Maybe you should take him out somewhere fun," Sirius suggested, tugging unhappily at the collar of his suit. "You know, take his mind off Dora."

"We'll see how he behaves first," Andi said sternly. "I'll not reward him if he throws a tantrum."

"Fair enough," Sirius nodded.

A loud bang from their left drew their attention to the dirt road leading to the house. A big yellow school bus sped down the road at an unnatural speed before slamming on the brakes in front of them. They all had to cover their faces from the sand and dust kicked up by the tires.

“Americans really use yellow school buses?” Sirius asked with a cough.

“I was surprised too,” Ted told him. “I thought they were only in the movies.”

The door to the bus folded open with a creak, and a large woman in her fifties with wild, dark hair tinged with grey looked at them.

“Nymphadora Tonks?” she asked loudly.

“That’s me!” Nymphadora grinned.

“Well, hop on,” the driver told her.

Stepping forward, Andi hugged her daughter.

“Have a good day, dear. And make sure to be on your best behavior,” she said, taking Harry by the hand. “Come on, Harry. It’s time for Dora to go to school.”

Harry sniffled, his bottom lip quivering as Nymphadora kissed him on the cheek and boarded the bus. With only a few other kids aboard, they sat in a group, getting to know each other.

“I’ll drop her off just after two,” the driver yelled.

Closing the door with a creak, the bus took off with a bang, kicking up another cloud of dust and sand as it rocketed down the road. Andi covered Harry while Sirius and Ted turned their backs, using their wands to clear the air.

“Bloody hell, that’s worse than the Knight Bus,” Sirius grumbled.

“Language!” Andi hissed.

He rolled his eyes while Harry started to cry. Sighing, he checked his watch and saw he only had a few minutes to get to work.

“Don’t worry, Harry,” Sirius said to his Godson. “She’ll be home before you know it. Sorry, Andi, I have to get to work.”

“Me too,” Ted said.

Kissing his wife on the cheek, he and Sirius Disappeared, leaving her alone with a crying toddler. Sighing, she picked Harry up and carried him back to the house.

On Harry’s fifth birthday, the family held a party outside to celebrate. After the food had been eaten and the cake devoured, he got to open his presents. From Ted and Andi, he got a few magical board games. Remus had gotten him a few new books, including one about himself that had him and Nymphadora giggling like mad.

“Harry Potter and the Troll Bridge?” Nymphadora laughed. “Harry, you’re the worst superhero ever.”

“Hey!” Harry yelled. “You couldn’t fight a Troll, either.”

“Yeah, but they don’t write books about me,” Nymphadora teased, sticking out her tongue.

“Remus, where did you get that?” Ted asked with a frown.

“I found it at the bookshop,” Remus replied. “They’re not too popular over here, but the owner said they’re a best-seller in Britain.”

"Is that even legal?" Andi asked, brow furrowed.

"No, it isn't," Ted said, folding his arms over his chest. "I couldn't do anything about the name alone, but the fact that they describe him exactly, even his scar, is infringement."

"Are you going to sue them?" Nymphadora asked excitedly.

"I could," Ted answered when the others looked at him curiously. "I'd have to go back to Britain for a bit, but I have a better idea. Why don't I write them a letter and see if we can make a deal? Harry could get a share of the profits to save for the future, and we could make them add a disclaimer."

"That could work," Andi smiled. "And if they don't agree, we can sue the pants off them. I love it when you get all Slytherpuff on me."

Leaning in, she wrapped her arms around Ted and kissed him on the lips.

"EW!" Harry, nymphadora, and Sirius exclaimed.

"Oh, grow up, you three," Andi said amongst the laughter.

Once they settled, Harry opened his last present, which was from Sirius.

"Yes!" he cheered, pulling the broom from the long, thin box. "Thank you, Sirius! Thank you!"

"You're welcome, kiddo," Sirius said, hugging his ecstatic Godson.

"You just be careful on that," Andi said sternly. "If you get hurt, I won't hesitate to take it away."

“I will. I promise,” Harry said, staring at the broom in his hands. “Can I fly it now?”

Before anyone could respond, Nymphadora pulled Harry close and whispered in his ear.

“Oh, right,” he said. “I forgot.”

“What are you two up to?” Andi asked suspiciously.

“Nothing,” Nymphadora replied quickly. “We just got a present for Sirius we wanted to give him. I’ll go get it.”

As Andi opened her mouth to reply, Nymphadora dashed inside. Sirius patted Harry on the back and smiled.

“You know you’re not supposed to get other people presents on your birthday, right?” he asked.

“We wanted to,” Harry said with an innocent smile.

Sirius beamed, and Andi folded her arms over her chest. A moment later, Nymphadora came back outside, a large, poorly wrapped box in her hands.

“Here you go, Uncle Sirius,” she said, handing it to him.

“Aw, you shouldn’t have,” Sirius said, pulling the bow loose and tearing the wrapping paper.

He never noticed the kids snickering silently as he pulled the lid off of the box.

“AH!”

Sirius let out a high-pitched scream and fell backwards off the picnic table bench as a rattlesnake poked up its head to look at him with a hiss. Coiling up in a ball, it rattled its tail threateningly. Harry and Nymphadora howled with laughter as Sirius scrambled back to his feet. Before anyone could get over their shock to yell at the kids, Harry turned to the snake and hissed. The snake stopped rattling and hissing and slithered out of the box and over to the boy.

“Harry, don’t touch that! It’s dangerous!” Sirius yelled, drawing his wand.

“She won’t hurt me,” Harry said, letting the snake climb up his arm where it draped itself calmly over his shoulders. “See?”

Giggling, Tonks stroked the top of the snake's head.

“Harry?” Andi asked shakily. “Can you... talk to it?”

“Uh-huh,” he grinned.

“Awesome, isn’t it?” Nymphadora asked.

“How?” Andi asked, furrowing her brow. “Sirius, did James ever mention anyone in his family being a Parselmouth?”

“No, never,” Sirius said, staring at Harry dumbfoundedly.

Harry hissed to the rattlesnake again and set it on the ground. Giving a glance at the adults, it slithered off into the brush, disappearing quickly.

“Can I go flying now?” Harry asked.

“Sure,” Sirius said, jumping in before Andi could respond angrily. “Dora, why don’t you go grab your broom and go with him?”

“Okay!” Nymphadora smiled, dashing back inside.

“Sirius,” Andi hissed threateningly.

“We need to talk about this, and I don’t want the kids around,” he whispered back. “Besides, I kind of deserved that for turning his hair blue.”

“That was you?” Andi asked incredulously. “Dora thought he was a Metamorphmagus!”

“They started it with the water balloons,” Sirius muttered.

Andi smacked him upside the head before rolling her eyes while Ted chuckled behind her. Nymphadora returned with her broom in hand. Without a word, Harry mounted his, and they took off into the air. Sirius smiled, seeing his Godson take to the air so naturally.

“Do you think we should tell anyone?” Andi asked with one eye on the kids.

“No,” Sirius replied. “They might not care here, but Britain will vilify him. We’ll have to tell them to keep a secret.”

“But where did it come from?” Andi asked. “Parseltongue isn’t something that just pops up like that. It’s hereditary.”

“Do you think it has anything to do with You-Know-Who?” Ted asked, continuing when they looked at him sharply. “Well, he was known to have the skill, and no one really knows what happened that night. Maybe he gave it to Harry, somehow.”

“I don’t even know if that’s possible,” Andi said, sighing.

“Even if he didn’t, it doesn’t mean anything,” Sirius said firmly. “He’s still Harry. That’s all that matters.”

At the age of eight, Harry went flying after school. He’d wanted Tonks to go with him, but she was stuck inside until she finished her homework. Pushing his training broom to its limits, he reached the nearby canyons after half an hour and grinned as he zipped between the narrow, jagged walls. Fortunately, there weren’t many Muggles out there. It was the wrong time of year.

As he zipped along with the Colorado River rushing beneath him, he caught movement at the top of the canyon. Slowing down, he watched as a large bird hopped forward and plummeted towards the ground. With the sun ahead, he couldn’t tell what bird it was, but he assumed falling wasn’t part of its plan when it jumped. Shooting forward, Harry dove down, catching up to the squawking creature and catching it in his hands. With a closer look, he noticed that while it was pretty big, it was still young.

“It doesn’t look like you’re ready to fly yet, big guy,” Harry smiled, slowing to a stop.

Chirping softly, the bird latched its talons onto the handle of his broom. Looking up, Harry spotted the edge of a nest hanging over the top of the canyon. Flying up carefully, he hovered next to it and blinked at the size. The nest was massive, easily five feet wide. Inside, two other chicks chirped when they spotted him. The chick holding onto his broom responded in kind, chirping loudly. As the other two waddled over, a massive shadow passed quickly over Harry.

When he looked up, he caught sight of a blur of white feathers, much brighter than the grey of the chicks. As he looked around for the source of the shadow, something large and heavy landed in the nest. By now, Harry had an idea of what he was going to find and turned his head

slowly. The massive Thunderbird flared her six wings wide and looked at Harry curiously, her sharp, yellow eyes traveling from him to the chick standing on his broom handle.

“Whoa,” Harry breathed. “Uh, I was just bringing him back. He fell out of the nest.”

The mother tilted her head as she stared at him, electricity crackling from the horn-like feathers on the top of her head. Swallowing nervously, Harry picked up the chick and quickly but gently placed it back in the nest without his eyes ever leaving the mother.

“I’ll – uh – I’ll go now,” Harry said.

Chirping happily, the chick chattered with its siblings while the mother watched Harry slowly descend back into the canyon. Once he was safely out of sight, he grinned and laughed quietly.

“That was amazing,” he said to himself, his heart hammering in his chest. “I can’t wait to tell Dora. She’s going to be so jealous.”

Just then, Harry heard a loud chirp above him. He looked up just in time to see the chick spread its wings and jump out of the nest. Eyes wide, he watched as it plummeted toward the Colorado River.

“Not again,” Harry said, rolling over and diving after it.

This time, he let the bird get as low as possible, hoping it would start flying on its own, before catching it in his hands. Squawking angrily, the little thunderbird clacked its beak in annoyance as it gripped his broom.

“Don’t worry, I’m sure you’ll get the hang of it soon,” Harry said.

Glancing up at the nest, he took a nervous breath when he saw the mother and the chicks watching him closely. Slowly, he flew back up and gently placed the chick back in the nest. This time, it was barely back in before it jumped out again.

“Oh, come on,” Harry huffed.

Rolling over, he dove down and caught the bird again. As he reached the nest once more, the mother cawed loudly and took to the air. Harry worried for a moment that she was angry at him but relaxed when she flew up. Circling above him, she looked directly at him and cawed again. Cautiously, he flew up to meet her. As soon as he got close, the Thunderbird flew higher, and Harry followed, the chick chirping happily from his broom.

Suddenly, the mother screeched a frightening sound that echoed through the canyon below him. As she flew in circles, the air cooled, the wind started to blow, and Harry could smell rain in the air. In moments, the sparse, puffy white clouds overhead started to grow, gradually turning grey as they blotted out the sun. Lightning lit up the sky a moment before the rain started to fall. Harry watched in awe as the storm grew to cover the entire valley.

The wind picked up, and he had to actively work against it to stay in one place. The chick crooned happily and spread its wings wide. Letting go of the broom, he took to the air, pushed upwards by rising air currents.

“Yeah!” Harry cheered, laughing.

The chick chirped, flapping its wings furiously to fly around his head. Hearing more chirps, Harry looked over his shoulder and smiled when he saw the other two flying up to join them. When they did, the mother cawed loudly and began flying north. The chicks followed, and Harry trailed after them. His clothes were drenched, and he was buffeted by the wind, but the smile on his face never faltered.

As a group, they soared through the air until the sun started to near the horizon. Flapping her powerful wings, the mother shot into the air, heedless of the lightning striking its body. Spreading her wings wide, backlit by the continuous lightning striking around her, she cawed

loudly, and the storm ceased. Harry laughed in amazement as she flew back down, the clouds already dispersing as the wind calmed. Turning, he followed them back to the nest.

“That was awesome!” Harry laughed, coming to a stop.

Reaching out, he petted the chick that had been so determined to fly, his cheeks hurting from smiling so much.

“I need to head back home before I get in trouble,” Harry said to the mother, not sure if she could understand him or not. “I’ll see if I can come back tomorrow. I have a friend that would love to meet you. Bye.”

Waving, he started back home. The chick chirped and tried to follow him, but the mother stopped him gently with her wing. Grinning, Harry flew home as fast as he could, anxious to tell Dora everything.

“Let me get this straight,” Andi said, staring at the young Thunderbird sitting on Harry’s shoulder. “You made friends with a whole nest of Thunderbirds, never told us, and now this one wants to stay with you.”

Nymphadora giggled as Harry and the Thunderbird looked at each other, turned back to Andi, and nodded in unison.

“Oh, for Merlin’s sake,” she cried, throwing her hands into the air. “Can’t you ever do anything normal?”

Harry shrugged, looking up at her through his eyelashes in an expression Nymphadora had taught him to use when he really wanted something.

“Harry, I don’t even know if it’s legal to keep one,” Andi sighed.

“Well, actually,” Ted said, stepping forward. “Thunderbirds are a protected species. I had a client that lost his barn for eight months when one decided to make a nest on the roof. Technically, it would be illegal to make it leave.”

“You’re the luckiest kid in the world, Harry,” Sirius said, shaking his head with a laugh.

“Where are we going to keep it?” Andi asked helplessly. “And what happens when he goes to Ilvermorny in a few years?”

“Oh, I’m sure they’ll be happy to house it on the grounds,” Ted assured her, wrapping an arm around her shoulders. “You know how flashy Americans like to be. They’ll probably make it the school mascot. And I doubt we need to worry about it staying here. This is where they live. I’m sure Harry’s friend can take care of himself.”

“We need to name him,” Nymphadora said suddenly.

“I think it’s a her, actually,” Harry said, earning a loud croon from his companion.

“Aw, Harry has a girlfriend,” Nymphadora sang.

“I do not!” Harry yelled.

“No fighting,” Ted warned.

“Sorry,” Nymphadora and Harry said in unison.

“What about Sparky?” she asked.

“Nah,” Harry said. “What about Volt?”

The Thunderbird clacked her beak in disapproval.

“Voltron?” he offered.

“That sounds like a Transformer,” Nymphadora scoffed. “Ooh, what about Pikachu?”

The Thunderbird cocked her head to the side curiously.

“I’m not naming her after a Pokémon,” Harry said firmly.

“What about Levina?” Ted asked. “It’s Latin for lightning bolt.”

“Levina,” Harry repeated, looking at the bird on his shoulder.

The newly named Levina threw her head back and cawed happily, bolts of electricity arcing from the horn-like feathers on her head.

Fourteen-year-old Harry hated Jacob, he decided. When he’d agreed to let Tonks invite her friends from Ilvermorny to his birthday party, he hadn’t expected her to reveal the tall, spiky-haired, good-looking douchebag was her new boyfriend. Harry wasn’t sure why he hated him, but he did.

They’d gone to Lake Mead, where he had to stop himself, several times, from pushing the dick into the water.

Only a couple of Harry's friends from school had been able to come, Marissa and Johnny. The rest were on vacation with their families. But, even if they'd been able to come, it wouldn't have made much difference. He only had two others in his class, and they weren't that close. Johnny Barktree was a tall, Native American boy. He tended to stay quiet unless he had something important to say.

Marissa was a shy little blonde that Harry had befriended when one of his classmates, Chris, had tried to bully her. He'd gotten in trouble for punching him in the nose, but it had been worth it. Aunt Andi had been mad, but Sirius thought he'd done the right thing. Unfortunately, the school had a no-tolerance policy for fighting. When Harry had pointed out that they were supposed to have a no-tolerance policy for bullying, and he'd actually done the school a favor, his principal had given him a three-day suspension.

"Hey, Harry!" Sirius shouted from the grill, wearing a 'Kiss the Chef' apron. "Foods ready!"

Sighing, Harry got to his feet and brushed the sand off of his shorts. As he got closer, he got another look at Dora in her blue bikini. She looked bustier than she usually did, and her hair was long and blonde, an unusual look for her. Aunt Andi thought she was growing up, but Harry didn't think so. He thought she was doing it to impress that asshole, Jacob. Putting a smile on his face so no one asked him what was wrong, he joined his friends and family.

As they ate and talked, more and more of Dora's friends started to show up. Harry cheered up a bit when he got to see so many pretty girls running around in bikinis. A rather short, busty brunette nearly popped out of her top twice, just getting into her seat. Unfortunately, Harry had only just turned fourteen, and all of Dora's friends were eighteen or older, so they didn't spare him a second glance besides wishing him a happy birthday.

After lunch, Harry opened his presents. Dora and a few others, including that shit-stain Jacob, stayed to watch while the rest went swimming. He got some new defensive magic books from Remus, Aunt Andi, and Uncle Ted got him a wizard's shaving kit, Dora got him candy and pranking supplies, and Sirius got him a new broom. Harry gaped at the brand new Lockheed Velocity. Officially, it was the fastest broom in the world, taking the title from the Firebolt just six weeks after its release. The Lockheed wasn't as nimble as the Firebolt, that was for sure, but it wasn't meant to be a Quidditch broom. It was designed to go like hell. Zero to sixty in just over two seconds with a top speed of one hundred and eighty miles an hour, it could leave the Firebolt in its dust.

“Holy shit,” Harry said, earning him laughter and a scolding from Aunt Andi.

“Why don’t you go take it for a spin?” Sirius asked.

“Yeah,” Harry said, getting to his feet. “You want to come with me, Dora?”

He looked at her hopefully, but he could tell by the look on her face she didn’t want to.

“You go ahead, Harry,” she smiled. “I didn’t bring my broom.”

“Alright,” Harry said.

Turning away before his emotions could show, he mounted his broom and rocketed into the sky. Trying to fly his thoughts away, he didn’t even notice when Levina joined him. Impressively, his feathered friend managed to keep up with his new broom, but only just. By now, she’d grown to her full size, dwarfing Harry with her fifty-foot wingspan. As they shot across the surface of the lake, leaving splashing ripples in their wake, Harry spotted some new arrivals.

He paused above the beach, a little confused when he saw Dora get out of a Jeep and walk towards the beach. It wasn’t until he looked closer that he realized it wasn’t Dora but a girl that looked like her. They even had the same color bikini. Levina cawed and flew over to Sirius, looking for food, while Harry stealthily edged closer to the beach. The girl walked over to where Dora and Jacob were lounging on towels near the water. Smirking at Dora, she gave Jacob a flirtatious smile before walking a short distance away, her hips swaying exaggeratedly, and Harry wasn’t the only one to be caught looking.

Looking over her shoulder, the girl smirked nastily.

“You know he’s only dating you because I turned him down, don’t you?” she asked Dora. “Nice hair, by the way.”

Dora fumed as the girl walked away, her hair turning red and shrinking into her scalp until it was the short, pixy style she usually preferred. Jumping to her feet, she glared at the panicked-looking Jacob.

"I knew it!" she hissed furiously. "You said you never asked her out."

"Dora, it's not what you-"

"Don't you dare tell me it's not what I think," Dora growled. "And don't call me Dora, ever. The only people who can call me that are my family and Harry."

Her wand was out faster than Harry could blink, and with a flick, she banished Jacob out into the water, where he landed on his stomach with a loud splash. Storming off, Dora climbed on a boulder and sat with her arms around her legs, forehead resting on her knees.

Floating over, Harry landed behind her, set his broom down, and sat down beside her.

"You want to talk about it?" he asked.

Sniffing, Dora shook her head and scooted closer, resting her head on his shoulder. Harry sighed exaggeratedly.

"Thank Merlin. You know I'm shit at that," he said.

Dora snorted and smacked his bare chest. As she slid her hand back, she hooked his arm and hugged it to her chest. Harry did his best to ignore the way her breasts felt against his bicep.

His best was woefully inadequate. He just prayed they didn't have to get up anytime soon.

"I can't believe I let him fool me like that," Dora sighed miserably. "I swore I'd never change like that for anyone, and what do I do? The first time a good-looking guy asks me out, I turn myself into a blonde bimbo for him to drool over."

"I don't think it was the blonde hair he was drooling over," Harry told her, earning a snort. "Forget about Jacob. He's a dickhead, anyways."

"You barely talked to him," Tonks chuckled.

"I didn't need to," Harry said. "I'm an expert at spotting dickheads."

There was a beat of silence as what he said registered with both of them, and they broke out laughing.

"Please don't tell Sirius I said that. He'll never let me live it down," Harry laughed.

"Your secrets safe with me," Dora said, grinning teasingly as she patted his arm.

He knew she would tease him about this for years to come, but it was worth it to see her smiling again. Sighing, she looked back over the beach. When he saw her frown sadly, he followed her eyeline and bit back a growl when he saw Jacob making out with the blonde skank. Looking over at the picnic area, he saw Sirius, Ted, and Andromeda talking, completely oblivious to what was happening.

"You want to get out of here?" Harry asked suddenly.

"I'd love to," Dora sighed. "But there's no way Mum and Dad would let me leave your birthday party early. It's fine. I can deal with it."

Looking over at Levina, who was drinking from the lake, he whistled quietly. The Thunderbird lifted her head and looked over at him curiously. Looking her in the eyes, he glanced up at the sky meaningfully. Nodding her head, Levina took to the sky with a flap of her wings and climbed in an upward spiral.

“Harry, what are you doing?” Dora asked.

He just smiled as thunder rumbled overhead. A moment later, the skies opened up in a downpour. The girls lounging on the beach screamed, the guys cursed, and everyone scrambled to get out of the sudden storm.

“Harry...,” Dora whispered, turning back to him in shock.

Shaking her head, she smiled and kissed him on the cheek softly.

“Thank you,” she said.

“It was a boring party anyways,” Harry said.

Getting to their feet, Harry grabbed his broom, and they ran to the parking lot and climbed into Ted’s old station wagon. Ted and Andi packed everything up magically to get out before the roads flooded, while Sirius stayed behind to make sure everyone got out alright.

It was a quiet ride home, with Ted filling the silence with tales from his latest cases. After a twenty-minute drive, they arrived home, where Sirius was waiting for them.

“Sorry we had to cut your party so short, Harry,” he said, helping them unpack the car.

“It’s fine,” Harry smiled. “It’s not like you can control the weather.”

Patting him on the back, Sirius led the way back into the house. Once everything was inside, Dora begged off to her room, claiming she was tired.

“Boys, why don’t you go throw the towels in the wash while Harry and I put the food away,” Andi said.

Nodding, Sirius and Ted made for the washroom. Harry grabbed the cooler and set it on the table just as Levina landed in her nest on the hilltop in the backyard.

“That was a really nice thing you did,” Andi said, pulling him into a surprising hug.

“Er, what?” Harry asked.

“Don’t play dumb,” she scolded him. “I saw everything. As much as I try to protect you and Dora, sometimes, teenagers need to make their own mistakes. I just hope Dora learns from this and finds a boy that wants to be with her and not what she can become.”

“I’m sure she will,” Harry said, the words tasting like sawdust in his mouth.

Smiling knowingly, Andi ran her hand through his hair in a motherly fashion and caressed his cheek.

“So am I,” she said. “But until she does, you just keep looking out for her like you did today. Sometimes, a girl doesn’t need you to solve her problems; she just needs you to be there for her to get over them herself.”

Harry didn’t know what the hell she meant by that, but he nodded anyways. Once they’d finished putting the food away, he went to his room, put his presents away, and laid down on his bed. Slowly, a smile stretched his lips. In just a month, he’d be going to Ilvermorny with Tonks.