

“...You can really get a letter to him? And he can write back?” Blaise’s voice was so hopeful, it sent a pang through Harry’s chest — oh, those boys were so smitten, it warmed his heart to see it.

“Takes a couple days, but yeah.” If Snape couldn’t deliver him letters, Ceri was always down for the job, and no one had yet figured out they needed to ward against house elves. Harry was amazed he was the only one who seemed to have discovered such an obvious flaw in the school defences.

“Brilliant.” Blaise ran a hand over his short hair. “I’ll have a letter for you by the weekend. Thanks, Harry.”

“Happy to help.” He bumped Blaise’s shoulder companionably with his own. “You two are good for each other.” He hadn’t been sure at first, but seeing the pair of them together made sense — even more so now he had discovered this mischievous side of Blaise.

“It won’t be easy, my last two years now he’s graduated,” Blaise admitted. “But we’ll make it work. And it’ll be easier once Umbridge is gone.” There was no doubt in anyone’s mind that Umbridge would not last until September. She would not be the one to break the DADA curse.

“I hope so.” There was a loud noise outside the hall, and both of them froze. “We should get to bed.”

Blaise nodded, watching Harry disappear under his invisibility cloak. He shook his head in amazement. “I can’t believe you have a cloak like that,” he murmured enviously. Harry let out a soft laugh, and bid the Slytherin goodnight, heading back up to Gryffindor.

Maybe next time he’d let Blaise in on the secret of the Marauder’s Map.

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Harry’s prank went off without a hitch, and with no clear signs of where Umbridge could place the blame. The frogs followed her around for the entire day, resistant to all attempts at Vanishing them — and burning, freezing, stunning, or just about anything else she could throw at it. Flitwick quietly offered thirty points to whoever had come up with such ingenious magic, but the rubies in the Gryffindor hourglass didn’t give anything away — nor did they last long. But no one cared about the house points anymore; the only thing worth anything anymore was the quidditch cup. And no one wanted it more than Angelina Johnson.

Given the last-minute need for a replacement pair of Gryffindor beaters, no one was expecting miracles. Anyone in fifth or seventh year was far too stressed about exams to give up their precious free time, and the younger candidates were... not fantastic. After a rather haphazard try-out, they ended up with a pair of third years; Andrew Kirke and Jack Sloper.

They weren’t the *worst* beaters Harry had ever seen, but they were certainly close.

“It’s just one match,” Angelina was muttering to herself at breakfast before the game. “We just need a sixty point lead to take the cup.”