

“Indeed — I had heard the rumour that you and Mr Malfoy have buried the hatchet,” Pomfrey remarked. “I didn’t believe it at first; not after the number of times one of you has ended up under my care due to the other.”

Harry laughed, running a hand through his hair. “Yeah, I can see how it would be a surprise.”

“I hope this friendship with the Slytherins means I shall see less of you, Mr Potter. Though I will admit you did very well at avoiding the need for medical care last year.” She narrowed her gaze at him shrewdly. “Or at least avoiding coming to me for such things.”

Harry’s stride faltered. “I, uh—“

“That awful Blood Quill should never have entered this school,” Pomfrey continued. Relief filled Harry — she wasn’t talking about any of the other issues he’d gone to Snape for, just his punishments at Umbridge’s hand.

“Oh. Yeah, I— none of us wanted to get you in trouble, if you had to report it or anything,” he said, shrugging helplessly. “We handled it ourselves. You were needed for everything else.”

Pomfrey’s gaze softened, and she patted his arm. “I understand, and I thank you, though I wish you had not been put in that position to begin with.” They approached the open front doors of the castle, and Pomfrey paused on the threshold. “Look after yourself, Mr Potter,” she said, a hint of fondness to her tone. “And if Mr Malfoy is truly planning a career in the healing arts, tell him I would always welcome an assistant, when he has free time. If he is interested, of course.”

Harry grinned at her. “He will be. I’ll pass on the message. Thanks, Madam Pomfrey.”

She nodded, and the pair parted ways, Harry heading up to Gryffindor to shower and change out of his quidditch training gear.

He had a team. That was one problem solved. Thank Merlin he only had to do that once.

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The gates of the Pottery were wide open, and Sirius paced in front of them, a scrap of parchment in hand. Andromeda had warned him she was bringing a new family in need of sanctuary, and he was worried they’d been waylaid somehow.

At last, there was the crack of apparition. Sirius whirled around, seeing his cousin stood with a pair of women who were clearly related, sharing the same curly auburn hair and round freckled cheeks. The older woman was wide-eyed and slightly green in the face, while the younger looked barely old enough to be out of Hogwarts. “Good, you got my message,” Andi said in greeting, her arm around the older of the pair. “This is Helen Ashford, and her daughter Niamh, recently graduated from Ravenclaw. Niamh believed herself to be muggleborn up until last week — an Inheritance test at Gringotts has revealed her to be the Rosier heir.”