

birth. Seven minutes past two in the morning. Not truly as the seventh month was dying, but close enough to it.

“Oh, good.” Hannah settled down in her bed. “I can let my food settle before I have to take a pain potion.”

“Are you sure you’re up for this, Hannah?” Neville fretted. She looked up with hard eyes.

“Do I have a choice?” she retorted pointedly. “I’ll be fine, Nev. Sooner we get this out of the way, the sooner they can call in a specialist and sort me out.”

Anyone who thought that Hufflepuffs were weak or spineless had never met a true Hufflepuff, Harry thought to himself. Here Hannah was, quite *literally* spineless, and she was still ready to go to war however she could.

“We won’t have to hold it for as long as last time,” Luna pointed out serenely, patting Neville’s arm.

The door to Pomfrey’s office opened, and the mediwitch walked out with Draco at her side. When he saw the four of them, he stopped in his tracks. “Oh, fuck,” he declared emphatically. “So soon?”

“Not immediately,” Harry assured. “Couple of hours. Sev’s gone,” he added as explanation, ignoring Neville’s narrow-eyed look at the address. There would be time for those truths later.

“Well,” Pomfrey said, running her hands over her apron. “That changes things. I’ll send an elf to Horace, see if he can send up the last of those Blood Replenishing potions he’s been brewing. I trust the headmistress has been alerted?”

Harry hadn’t seen McGonagall in the Hall when he’d left, but he was sure someone had run to find her, so he nodded.

“Good. Mr Malfoy, would you ready Miss Abbott’s evening potions, please?” Pomfrey requested. Draco jumped to work, and the three heirs perched on the edge of the bed beside Hannah, pressed shoulder to shoulder as she downed four potions, grimacing between each one.

“Thanks, Draco,” she said when he passed her a glass of water.

It was torture, the waiting. Watching Pomfrey and Draco ready the Hospital Wing for whatever emergencies it may bring, watching the other healers and volunteer assistants file in with grim faces.

After an hour, Luna stiffened. “We should go,” she declared. Harry and Neville shared a look.

“Okay, then.”

Harry had an eye on Draco, watching as the blond sucked in a sharp breath as soon as he saw they had stood. He almost dropped the roll of bandages he was holding, but set it down on a