

— people cleaning up outside, or off at the Ministry, or just taking a private moment for themselves to decompress. Harry could understand that urge.

And yet, the flurry of red hair that he saw upon entering the Hospital Wing almost made him faint with relief.

They didn't even seem to be patients — Mrs Weasley was bustling from bed to bed, handing out cups of tea, while Fred and George appeared to be working on healing some people. Ron was sat beside a bed that held Hermione, a bandage creeping up her neck and shoulder. That was still a few Weasleys short. Thinking over the group, Harry was sure they had to be with the Ministry lot — Percy, and Arthur, and Bill and Fleur. They would want to be involved in that.

“Mother!” Draco half-dragged Harry over to a bed, where Narcissa Malfoy was sat up and drinking tea, her leg propped up on a pillow.

“Oh, my darling boys,” she greeted happily. “All three of you! I'm so glad to see you.”

Out of the corner of his eye, Harry saw Snape's face turn quietly disgruntled at being referred to as one of her ‘darling boys’.

And then the man seemed to drain of colour entirely.

Harry followed his gaze to a bed in the corner, in which lay a worryingly still Remus Lupin.

“Severus!” Narcissa's sharp voice wrenched the man from his daze. “He's alright,” she assured, gentler this time. “He was awake earlier. He got mildly crushed by a dead troll, so I'm told, but managed to hold it up so a student was not flattened to death. It all sounds rather heroic indeed.” Her lips curled at the corners. “Strains, bruises and a broken collarbone; nothing Madame Delacour could not fix. I believe he's only out from exhaustion — you could go and wake him, if you like.”

Snape stayed put, fists clenched at his sides, torn between going to Remus and sticking with the boys he'd sworn to protect. Harry reached out, putting a gentle hand on his arm. “Go to him,” he urged. “I promise, Draco and I are just going up to the dorm after this. Shower and sleep, nothing dangerous. We'll be fine. He needs you more than we do, Sirius will understand.”

After a beat of indecision, Snape nodded, and strode off to go and sit beside Remus' bed, carefully shaking his un-banded shoulder. Harry held his breath until he saw the werewolf's eyes flicker open, saw him smile broadly at the sight of Snape unharmed.

They didn't embrace, or kiss, or even hold hands. But that didn't mean a thing compared to the love and relief on Remus' face, or the small but genuine smile on Snape's.

It was a good thing no one was paying attention but Harry.

“Word has been sent to St Mungo's.” Narcissa's voice drew him back to the conversation. “There should be more healers coming through as soon as the floo is back up and running.”