

One Drop Too Few

by IrishEspressoGirl

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Chapter 1 of 1

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Sirius plopped onto the bench in the Great Hall with a sigh of exasperation. "I feel like I've been bitten by a mackled malaclaw."

James narrowed his eyes at his friend. "Do you know what a mackled malaclaw *is*, Padfoot?"

"No, but that doesn't mean I can't feel like I've been bitten by one, eh, mate?"

James snorted as Remus explained mildly that the crustacean's bite would give its victim bad luck for a week.

James nodded knowingly. "Who is she, then, mate?"

Sirius groaned and lightly pounded his head on the table. "Marlene McKinnon," came the barely-audible reply.

"Again? What happened this time?"

Following much lamenting on Sirius's part and laughter from his friends, Sirius finally gave in to their prodding. "Last night I was sneaking back from the kitchens...."

Sirius stepped from behind the fruit-bowl painting, arms laden with goods lavished upon him by the obliging Hogwarts house-elves. Pulling a map from his robes and tapping it lightly with his wand, Sirius whispered, "I solemnly swear I am up to no good." Since most were home for the holidays, Sirius was reasonably sure no one would be about, but he checked out of habit.

Glancing down at the Map, he gave a light start and narrowly missed spilling his treats on the ground. "Marlene McKinnon" floated along the fifth-floor corridor, apparently moving toward the Prefect's Bathroom.

"I knew I'd need a bit of help this time, so I stowed the goods and went down to the dungeons, intending to nick Slughorn's stash of luck potion."

The molten gold Felix Felicis bubbled entrancingly; tiny droplets leapt to and fro over the cauldron, but none spilt. Sirius captured a few dancing droplets in a small crystal vial. Slughorn had warned them what too much would do, and Sirius only needed enough to last the night.

"Happy Christmas," he whispered to himself before upending the small vial.

Immediately, a golden warmth spread throughout his limbs, giving the illusion of invincibility—and like he could have anything he wanted.

"Hold up!" James interrupted. "Where was I when all this was going on?"

Sirius shrugged, glancing pointedly toward the red-haired Head Girl.

"I didn't check the Map again. With Felix helping, there wasn't need."

Marlene's dark hair shimmered over bare shoulders as she moved gracefully from the bubble-filled pool.

Sirius, mesmerized by the glimmering light reflected from the droplets that clung to her exposed skin, moved silently toward the witch.

Encouraged by Marlene's alluring smile, Sirius pressed his lips tightly to hers. After a few minutes, Sirius, emboldened by the knowledge of the potion's aid, allowed his hands to drift lower on her backside.

The movement seemed to awaken Marlene from a trance, for she jumped away and turned steely grey eyes on her erstwhile lover.

Sirius choked on his words and stuttered to an abrupt halt.

"What happened then, mate?" James asked conspiratorially.

Sirius shook his head, staring slack-jawed at the witch behind James.

"Nothing." Marlene's cold word effectively froze the conversation.

Author's Notes: Originally submitted to [Romancing the Wizard](#) for their Challenge Twenty-One: Winter Holidays Past. The challenge was to write a 500-word ficlet that took place during the winter holidays from the Founders to the Marauders, contained a magical element, and used the prompt "molten gold Felix Felicis." Many thanks to SealsleWitch for proof-reading.