

But I Knew

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Poppy Pomfrey's thoughts as students come into the infirmary. A new twist on the old marriage law challenge.

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Chapter 1 of 1

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Disclaimer: Anything you recognise belongs to the talented J K Rowling. I make nothing from this endeavor.

I would like to thank Meladara for the beta, especially on such short notice!

I watched cautiously as another seventh year girl came quietly into the infirmary. I knew why she was there, yet I still had to ask. "What brings you to the infirmary today, Miss Smith?"

"It's Mrs. Nott now, Madam Pomfrey," she said, her eyes scanning the room for other patients.

"Yes. Yes, I had forgotten you had married," I lied to her. I hadn't forgotten, but I would like to forget how many girls had been forced into marriage with this ridiculous marriage law passed by the Ministry. It had been passed almost six months ago, shortly after the end of the war.

Such a ridiculous law, to require marriage at only seventeen. It was even more ridiculous because the ministry was assigning spouses based on N.E.W.T scores and blood status. *For healthier babies, my arse.* I returned my gaze to Mrs. Nott and plastered a fake smile on my face.

"I-I need you to do a pregnancy charm, please. I don't know it," she said sadly, her eyes looking at the floor.

I performed the charm quickly, and then watched the tears form in her eyes as she saw the results. Another positive. Another seventh year girl who had no future but as a housewife.

I tried to be as positive with her as possible, giving her a prenatal potion and a book on pregnancy. I sighed quietly as the distressed girl left. She wouldn't be the last girl I would see this week, so I checked my stores of prenatal potions and prepared a list to give to Professor Snape.

He was another surprise after the war. I had always had a place in my heart for him when he was a student. He was in the infirmary way too often, and I had always felt sorry for the way those Gryffindor boys always picked on him. But he was as prickly as they come as an adult, and it was hard to treat him when he would come back from being called by *him*.

And the year that he was Headmaster, I had hated him. Hated him for killing Dumbledore. Hated him for lying to us all. Hated him, period.

Then I found out that he had been a spy all along when I had brought his medical records to St. Mungo's after the attack by that giant snake. I felt so guilty for doubting him. *I still feel guilty.*

I gathered my list and put it aside, knowing he would be coming up within the hour to pick it up. I had heard rumors, not from just the students, but from the other professors as well, that even he was subject to the marriage law. But he does not wear a ring, and he acts as if nothing has changed. Maybe he was somehow exempt due to his status as a teacher.

I sat down at my desk and had just started to put away patient files when I heard the infirmary door open once again. Once again I sighed when I realised it was another seventh year girl.

"Hello, Miss Granger. Are you ill?"

"Not exactly," she muttered under her breath. "I wanted you to confirm a-a pregnancy charm result." She held her head high and was not timid like the other girls I had already seen.

Not again, I thought quickly. Nodding to Miss Granger, I walked back towards my desk to retrieve my wand. I was puzzled when I noticed that she did not have a wedding band, since they were provided by the Ministry. I had not heard anything about her being married. But I knew that she was one of the oldest seventh years, so she had to be married.

I performed the scan, and the positive result was almost instantaneous. I looked at her and realised she did not have a look of horror like most of the other girls. In fact, if I didn't know better, I would say she almost looked relieved? Thinking I must have misinterpreted her reaction, I walked away to get her a copy of the book and a prenatal potion.

I was getting her potion when I heard the infirmary door open once again. It was Professor Snape to get the potions list. I glanced up at him, getting ready to tell him I would be with him momentarily when I noticed his gaze wasn't towards me.

If I had even blinked I would have missed it, but he looked at Miss Granger with...*concern*? He quickly turned his head towards me and spoke as he approached.

"I know I am early, Poppy, but I am here to get the potions inventory list."

"Well, it is a good thing you are early today, Severus. I've already given out three prenatal potions just this week. I only have two left, and the way things are going..." I trailed off when I noticed Miss Granger looking at us with interest.

"As I was saying, it is a good thing you are here. Let me go to the storeroom and check the stores of healing and burn paste before you leave."

I walked towards the storeroom, but made sure to stand in such a way that I could observe Severus and Miss Granger without them seeing me. I knew I shouldn't be watching, but I just had to see what was going on. I had a gut feeling and wanted to see if I was correct.

As he glanced over the list I had given him, she walked slowly towards him, eyeing the storeroom and the entrance door. I couldn't hear what they were saying, but I closely observed their body language.

He said something and gave her a questioning look. She simply nodded her head in response. I tried not to gasp out loud when I saw him smile at her. *Smile*. A genuine smile. I think I could count on one hand all the times I had ever seen Severus smile.

I walked out of the storeroom, and by then they were standing a respectable distance away from each other.

"Here is the rest of the list, Severus. Thank you for picking this up early." He nodded and started to leave the infirmary.

He looked toward the young woman and gave her a curt "Miss Granger" before walking out. Her reply of "Professor Snape" was just as neutral.

I walked over to Miss Granger and gave her the prenatal potion and pregnancy book. "I'm sorry about making you wait, Miss Granger. I needed to give Professor Snape the infirmary potions list." Handing her both items, I asked her if she had any questions. She shook her head and started to walk out the door. "I will need to see you in four weeks if you don't have a midwife by then," I told her as she walked out the door.

My mind started to reel as I thought about the last half hour. It did not take a Divination degree to know that Miss Granger was married to Professor Snape. Their body language had given it away. Now I knew why neither of them wore a wedding ring. It would be quite the scandal to know that the Head Girl was married to the Potions professor.

I knew that some of the seventh year girls had to leave Hogwarts to marry older men that they were matched with. Minerva had been especially distraught over losing some of her brightest students to this law. I couldn't help but be a little happy knowing that Miss Granger would be able to finish her education.

What surprised me most, though, was the way they acted towards each other. Although I did not see much, it did not seem like they resented each other. In fact, one could almost say that they seemed to care about each other. Odd, considering it was a ministry match. Maybe not all their matches were a bad idea – not that I would ever let anyone at the Ministry know that.

And they both seemed almost happy about the baby.

I snorted to myself as I wondered what everyone would think of the two of them being married. It was obvious that they wanted to keep it a secret. Miss Granger would graduate in a few months, well before the baby was born, so there was no reason to cause an uproar in the school. It would even be more surprising if anyone knew that they actually cared about each other.

But I knew. And it made me happy.