

ZigZag

by dracontia

Scorpius is still a little young to use the Floo alone, even for calls—so how is he supposed to stay in touch with his two best friends over the summer hols if he doesn't have an owl of his own?

Sequel to 'A Credit to Their Houses'

Chapter 1 of 1

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Scorpius pelted down the lawn and over the flowery knoll, panting and being beaten black-and-blue by his book bag. He hoped he wasn't too late. What a long, useless, miserable class was Transfiguration! The only way it could be worse was if grumpy old Professor Longbottom taught it.

If he missed the owlets' first flight because of it, well... that would be the fourth Unforgivable.

Scorpius caught sight of Mr. Hagrid's sheepish expression the instant he came around the corner of the little hut. His heart sank clear down to his shoes.

"I missed them, didn't I," Scorpius said hollowly.

All those months of nursing the little out-of-season, orphaned balls of fluff... keeping them warm in the front of his Muggle 'hoodie' robe while Hagrid filled bottles of horrid-smelling baby owl mixture... feeding them nasty dead mice... patiently letting them cling with increasingly sharp claws as they gathered the courage to take short, flappy hops, then longer ones, with Hagrid as their practice 'tree'...

He knew it was a little selfish, but Scorpius had hoped that maybe... he could keep one of them, if it didn't really want to go back to the wild.

"Er... Well, ye'd have been right proud of 'em, how quick they flew. Nettle went clean over the trees like she owned the forest," Mr. Hagrid said with a curious mixture of apology and pride. "Dart's still hanging around the edges here, somewhere."

"What about ZigZag?" Scorpius asked. He was just managing not to cry as it was. If something had befallen ZigZag, with his funny, lopsided way of taking off, he didn't think he could bear it.

A long, tremulous "Hooowooo!" answered Scorpius' query, and a doe-eyed bundle of scruffy brown feathers all but tumbled from the roof to land on his arm.

"Him? He's not cut out for the forest. Reckon all he wants is t'be someone's pet." Hagrid's woolly white beard spread with his smile. "A'most forgot—here," Hagrid shoved a small owl cage—which had perhaps seen better days but which was cleaned of any signs of former occupants—into Scorpius' free hand. "I know 'm late, lad, but Happy Birthday."

ZigZag nibbled at a strand of Scorpius' hair as if utterly unaware of the magnitude of the occasion. "Oh, Mr. Hagrid," Scorpius whispered, his heart in his voice, "Oh, thank

you. Thank you so very much."

"Thank the owl," Mr. Hagrid said, his already ruddy cheeks going even redder. "He's the one decided to stay. Anyhow, ye helped raise all of 'em. If anyone ought to keep one, it's you."

"Will he carry letters, even if he did come from the wild?" Scorpius let the cage lie for the moment while he petted the frowzy plumage on ZigZag's neck. He honestly didn't care if ZigZag could learn to carry post or not, but he somehow felt that Agate might turn her feathers up at ZigZag if he didn't. Rose's owl Ivy certainly would.

"Don't give him too many at first, while he's still youngish," Hagrid cautioned. "But sure, he'll do it. An owl hand-raised by a wizard'll know what to do. He's a bright 'un, and he thinks the world of you."

ZigZag hooted softly in agreement.

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