

Phoenix Meddling

by karelia

Fawkes' observations after Hermione and Severus rejoin the wizarding world. Loose sequel to And Then Rose the Phoenix.

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Chapter 1 of 1

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Phoenix Meddling

Occasionally, I do wonder why on earth I chose this particular familiar to protect and guide. Oh, I know, what with all the wisdom I'm known to possess, it certainly was the right choice. But honestly, life used to be so quaint and peaceful, with merely the occasional rescue mission when I was with my old familiar, whereas now, it seems I've taken on a new character trait, meddling...just like my old familiar was so prone to. The Muggle saying, a man becomes like his dog, appears to apply to magical beings and their pets too.

I've always had a soft spot for the Glaring Bat; the poor chap's life was being played like a mandolin by my old familiar for decades, all in the name of the Light. Seeing him injured in the battle field, just when even *I* was almost convinced the battle was won by the right kind of humans, well... I couldn't let the Ministry pea-brains put him away; my old familiar would have come out of the grave to expedite my next burning day. Of course, I ended up not just adopting *him*. No, there was Miss Savvy as well, she who stuck to him like dog hair. Still does, come to think of it. But he likes it, so all is well.

It was funny to watch them at the beginning. Two of the most brainy people in the wizarding world, each with more magical power than an entire pure-blood family, and both severely challenged in the show-your-feelings-department. It's not every day that the Glaring Bat blushes or is lost for words. But they spent months beating about the bush, and it became painful, so I felt obliged to take a leaf out of my old familiar's book and helped them a bit along. In the end, I just grabbed her and dropped her in the Bat's lap. Can you imagine my relief when they finally started snogging?

Once that was settled, my life became peaceful again. They produced an offspring, and everyone was happy. Pint-sized Batbaby grew into pint-sized Battoddler, and all was well. We moved to Hogsmeade shortly after the Glaring Bat was finally exonerated. After all, he had been forced by my old familiar to kill. But, alas, it took the pea-brains years to reach that conclusion.

At first, the entire village watched with consternation when my two familiars moved into the Glaring Bat's home, one my late familiar had bequeathed to him. He might have been exonerated, but that did not mean he was any more likeable. Next, they were horrified when he and Miss Savvy purchased a new home on the edge of the village and gifted the old one to Moronica, who had lost her parents in the war and her mate in the last battle. As you can imagine from the name I bestowed upon her, I care not for her, but she had a toddler and was about to drop with Minimoron when she lost her mate, and the Glaring Bat felt obliged to help her out...House loyalty and that...and Miss Savvy, blessed with more than a healthy dose of compassion, only encouraged him in this endeavour.

The attention of the wizarding population was distracted, however, when the youngest Mrs Weasley ran off with a famous Quidditch player. That was a much bigger scandal than the Glaring Bat gifting a house to a former pupil, and the gossip about the empty-headed chick leaving Ginger Boy was never-ending. The poor sod missed his

twins far more than his soon to be ex-wife, I have no other explanation for him turning up at our door-step and trying to convince Miss Savvy to team up with him and to bring her child along, claiming the *greasy git* wasn't a good father. Of course, she would hear none of it; she was far too happy with the Glaring Bat to even consider leaving him. And she hexed Ginger Boy for calling her love *that*.

Soon, life was once more peaceful, quaint, and serene. Shortly after a burning day, I needed to stretch my wings and flew about the village. I had to take a break soon, still weak from just having arisen from the ashes, so I perched on a window ledge of a house at the other end of Hogsmeade.

Out of sheer boredom...it was a grey day and everyone stayed indoors...I looked through the window into what indubitably was a bedroom. Blondie and Herb-Boy's son's bedroom, to be precise. My excellent hearing ensured to follow the conversation taking place inside, I could not help it.

"Now, then, young man, what did we hear about you?"

"It belongs to Valerian, and someone stole it, and Valerian thought it was me, but it wasn't me, and he said he'll hex me if I don't return it."

He stopped, and Blondie was evidently trying to untangle the rapidly uttered tuft of words before muttering, "As if!"

Herb-Boy said, "I thought I had asked you *not* to speak with Valerian, and I have very good reasons, Gaylord. That boy is not to be trusted."

"I talked to him... barely."

"I see. But obviously enough to get you into a situation in which you were accused of stealing something."

"No, Dad! I wouldn't have talked to him if he hadn't come up to me and said I stole it. And I didn't steal it! I wouldn't do anything like that!"

"Okay, okay," Blondie interrupted and turned to her mate. "Neville, go to Pansy and see if you get anything out of Valerian." She sighed deeply. "That boy needs a father."

Herb-Boy, who had survived more self-inflicted potions disasters in his youth than anyone known to wizarding kind, naturally knew better than to oppose anything his wife said; he merely nodded and left the room.

"We'll sort it out, my sweet, don't worry. Dad will go and investigate," Blondie said soothingly to her son before coaxing him out of bed to get ready for the day.

I was curious now. I had heard of Moronica's oldest son's trouble inducing qualities through Batgirl, who was friends with everyone, but to accuse another youngster of stealing was *very* naughty. Having recovered some of my strength, I flew over to Moronica's home and settled on the ledge of the kitchen window. Valerian was sitting at the table and glared at his mother when she entered. "I don't want to do maths, it's the most stupid subject, and I *will never* need it when I'm grown up!" he wailed.

She took a deep breath and replied, "You *will* need it, Valerian. Or do you wish to end up like Mr Filch, being a care-taker of some wizarding establishment? If you want to find your place in the world, it'll have to be with a Muggle job!"

Young Mr Moron gave her an incredulous look. "I'll do no such thing. Muggles! As if anyone wants anything to do with them." Then he started to wail. "It's all your fault, Mother! The Malfoys had *never* any Squibs in their families!"

Moronica's face hardened. "The Malfoys never had any *grown-up* Squibs, Valerian. And do you know why? I'll tell you why! Because they *disposed* of them while they were young."

The youngster started to howl, and his mother burst into tears. When she reached out to him, he yelled, "Don't touch me! Don't come near me! I want my Daddy!"

The sound of the bell interrupted the drama in the kitchen. Moronica trudged out to open the door and returned with Herb-Boy, who cast a half-smile in the young moron's direction. "Hi, Valerian," he said pleasantly.

Valerian just glared at him, not saying a word. I wished I could have smacked him, the prat. Blondie was right, that boy needed a male hand, never mind a father figure in his life. I decided there and then that I'd do what I could and flew back home to do some serious thinking.

The next morning, Miss Savvy returned from dropping Minimoron back home and told the Glaring Bat of meeting Blondie on her way home. Blondie might be generally known as positively weird, but she and the boy who survived more self-inflicted potions disasters than anyone else in wizarding history have been deliriously happy together, ever since they discovered each other during the last battle, and that's everything *but* weird.

Miss Savvy, of course, snorted when she retold the Bat of her conversation. "Luna is certainly right in that Pansy needs a man. She simply can't cope with Valerian, and the boy needs a father figure even more badly than his brother. But to suggest Ron? That's preposterous!" said Miss Savvy.

I laughed to myself. I'd known Blondie is a genius, and I wouldn't put it past her to play Cupid for Moronica. Or anyone else in that matter. She thinks, and rightly so, that everyone deserves the same level of happiness as she experiences with the boy of past potions disasters.

And the youngest Weasley, hm. I felt an urge to scratch my head, deep in thought about what could be done. I knew Ginger Boy never shown much interest in settling down since his good for nothing wife had left. I wondered if a partnership with Moronica would be beneficial for him. Or her, for that matter.

I decided it would be a good deed for everyone when I overheard the Glaring Bat tell his woman that he wished the red-headed sidekick would settle down because it would get *her* out of his system. Savvy Girl agreed, of course, and I saw her smug look as she detected a bit of possessiveness in her mate. I needed to start plotting, carefully, though; I had no wish to be known as the phoenix who meddles in his familiars' lives.

Ginger Boy would be good for Moronica. He needed a mate who could look up to him and his deeds, be it in the Aurory or the Quidditch department. Moronica would do that. I had no doubt after I had observed her a few times.

Batgirl helped me. I still call her that, even though she lost a lot of her bat features as she grew from toddler to girl. She's more clever than her parents combined, and I'll go diving in the lake on burning day if she doesn't end up in Slytherin. She's also the only one who can communicate wordlessly with me, which is why I chose her to assist in my next meddling project.

For the next few weeks, I changed my favourite location from the living room to Batgirl's room. Savvy Girl cast me a strange and suspicious look the first evening, but didn't say anything. As soon as she had kissed Batgirl goodnight and left the room, we started talking.

"What're you doing in my head, Fawkes?" she asked me sternly.

"Clever girl," I crooned. "You want your Uncle Ron to be happy, don't you?"

An exaggerated sigh escaped her, which reminded me of just whose offspring she is, even though she turned out much prettier, thank Merlin. "Do tell me your idea of happiness, Fawkes," she said, her sardonic tone only reinforcing her connection to the Glaring Bat.

"Well," I started carefully, "He's still unhappy about not being your mother's mate."

She interrupted me with a snort. "As if Mum wanted him. She's just perfect for Dad!"

"Yes, exactly," I said. "So we need to find a distraction for Ginger Boy. He sees his friends happy, but he's done nothing himself to remedy his own situation. I thought if we can make him realise that... your little friend Tarquin's mother also needs a mate, they might just team up and live happily ever after."

My speech was met with silence; Batgirl was mulling over what I'd just said.

A smile slowly spread across her face, quickly changing into a wicked grin. "Imagine," she said dreamily, "what pretty babies they'd make. Orange hair, freckles..." She giggled.

"Oh, never mind their potential offspring, young lady!" I admonished her. Trust Snape's precious to come up with the idea of orange-coloured pint-sized Weasels, probably twins to boot! "Now, seriously, what do you think? I know you're fond of your little friend, wouldn't you like him to have his own dad, too?"

She thought for a moment and nodded. "Yes," she said seriously, "he deserves a dad of his own. And I think he and Uncle Ron would make a good pair. Valerian, of course, is another matter entirely. I don't know what *he'd* say to that."

Batgirl had a point there. But I trusted that Valerian was young enough to adjust, and I had enough faith in the Weasley boy to straighten the young moron out, if for no other reason than his own upbringing within a large family. *If* he took the bait. "Alright. Let's assume for now that they'll live happily ever after, what can we do to... help the situation?" I asked delicately.

She thought some more, until suddenly, her face displayed a triumphant smile. "I know!" she exclaimed. "I'll lure Valerian to the caves outside Hogsmeade!"

I was lost. "And then what?" I asked flatly. Had I put too much confidence in Batgirl?

She cast me a look that clearly said, *My, aren't you a few flobberworms short of a meal today*, and said impatiently, "Think, Fawkes! It's easy climbing up into the caves, but to get back down is an entirely different story! That's where Uncle Ron will come in!"

I still wasn't quite sure about her idea, but I trusted her plotting abilities; she is a Snape, after all. Maybe it really was difficult to descent from the caves, at least for humans. I vowed to follow her, though. The worst case scenario would be that the pure-blooded moron would be stuck in the cave for a few hours, I figured.

Batgirl's eyes took on a dangerous glint, and I felt a tinge of fear. "So, Fawkes, if Uncle Ron and Pansy end up together, will you agree to be my familiar when I go to Hogwarts?" she asked sweetly.

"No!" I cried, horrified by the vision of being someone's familiar. What on earth was the girl thinking, I wondered.

"Ah, sorry, Fawkes," she said sheepishly. "I mean, will you adopt *me* as *your* familiar when I start at Hogwarts? I know it's a couple of years until then, but I would feel much better if I knew you came along with me."

I gave in quickly. After all, the prospect of living at Hogwarts wasn't so bad...I'd done it long enough before, and my current familiars would only be a short flight from there.

* * *

Batgirl managed to convince her little friend in no time that she was interested in getting to know his older brother. Within a couple of weeks, she and Valerian were becoming friends, and what surprised me most, little Tarquin never appeared to feel left out. I marvelled what a clever girl she was.

Young Moron had never been to the caves, so I wasn't surprised that he was excited when Batgirl mentioned exploring them. It was a warm late summer day the two set out, and I followed at a safe distance. I did not care to be discovered; Batgirl would have stopped collecting flobberworms for me, I had no doubt.

The two youngsters were talking animatedly all the way to the caves. To my utter surprise, Valerian was the perfect gentleman, helping Batgirl climb up the rocks and carrying the picnic basket she had brought along. I nestled a short distance away from the cave they had entered. I wanted to be certain Batgirl didn't need my help, but I did not want her to see me, so I choose a lone tree to perch on and cloaked my colourful plumage during the wait.

I was just pondering when I should start to worry whether they had been lost when Batgirl and Young Moron reappeared at the entrance to the first cave. "Come on, Val, let's get on the broom, it's much easier than climbing!" Batgirl encouraged him, picking up a broom that was leaning against a rock.

"N... no, I can't," Valerian replied, his face so beet-red, I could clearly see it from a distance. *Uh, oh*, I thought to myself. *What's she going to do now...*

Whether Batgirl knew that Valerian was a Squib or whether she was truly ignorant of the fact, I had no idea. She started laughing and banged her hand against her head. "Oh, silly me! You see, my dad taught me to ride a broom. Not that mom knows about it, it's a bit of a secret, but he said it's a good skill to have. I guess your mum doesn't like riding, just like mine," she said, blissfully ignorant of the glare the young moron cast in her direction.

"I know!" she exclaimed, as if the thought had only just entered her pretty head. "I'll go get Uncle Ron, he'll teach you to ride a broom!" And before the poor boy could reply, she had hopped onto the broom and was gone.

Valerian sat down on a rock, his legs drawn to him, his head resting against his knees. He looked positively defeated. I vowed to spill a few tears for him should he start wailing, but thankfully he didn't.

A few minutes passed before Batgirl reappeared, Ginger Boy in tow on his own broomstick. As soon as they landed, Weasley sat down next to the young moron. "Come on, I'll teach you how to fly. It isn't difficult, really," he said, putting his arm around the young one's shoulder.

"I can't do this," Valerian replied dejectedly. I thank the heavens that he never mentioned being a Squib.

"Try at least. If you try and find you can't do it, at least you'll know. But you don't know until you've tried!" Weasley told him. I had never before seen him act so gently and in such an encouraging manner with anyone. He managed to coax the young moron out of his shell and onto the broom.

"Come, first we'll fly together, so you get a feel for it. I'll hold you, so you don't have to worry about falling down."

And off they flew while Batgirl watched them, happiness radiating from her. The boys returned, landed, and Weasley said, "Now, that wasn't bad, was it?"

He was awarded with a brilliant smile. The boy looked even more angelic than usual, with his pretty blond hair and that radiating smile. Next, he mounted the broom on his own. Before I could even finish the thought of *Oh, no! He won't be able to fly*, the boy everyone thought was a Squib rose nearly two feet.

"See, Val!" cried Batgirl. "I knew you could do it!"

"Well done!" Ginger Boy praised. "The first time I went on a broom, I didn't manage to go up that high!"

They spent the next hour practising, and when it was time to return home, Valerian Malfoy had not only proven that he was not a Squib, but that he was rather talented on the broom as well. He managed to fly over the rocks from the caves right down to the edge of the village, all on his own.

Ginger Boy might not have the brightest lit wand, but he has a heart of gold. He gifted Valerian with a broomstick, and over the next few weeks, they practised flying almost every day. The young moron did not want his mother to know yet because he thought that despite his flying abilities, he might still be a Squib. When he shared his worries with his hero, Ginger Boy procured a toy wand and taught him simple spells, until both were convinced that he was truly magical.

When Valerian let his mother in on his secret, she cried happy tears for the first time in many years. Then she went and sought out Ronald Weasley to thank him for tickling the magic out of her son and to invite him for dinner.

Dinner with the Malfoy widow and her sons soon became a regular occasion for Ginger Boy, and eventually, it became lunch with them, and then breakfast as well. The day Valerian received his Hogwarts letter, his hero proposed to Moronica.

* * *

I have just returned to my familiar, now at Hogwarts, from a short excursion to Hogsmeade. Valerian, a proud second-year Hufflepuff, was notified earlier today of an addition to the family. Two additions, to be precise.

Batgirl, a proud first-year Slytherin, squeals in delight as I show her my imagines of the newly born Weasley twins. "See, Fawkes? I told you they'd have orange hair!"

Fin

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A/N

Grateful thanks to SouthernWitch69 for the beta.

This was written for the Paintbrush and Quill Society at Phoenix Rising and illustrated by the talented pennswoods of Snapecast fame. You can admire the artwork here: <http://pennswoods.livejournal.com/97227.html#cutid1>