

## The Fifth House

By MaireadInish

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Summary: This story is AU. It is based on the omniocular May 2007 "Wizard of the Month" challenge and the fifth house challenge issued by maireadinish (that would be me. Please feel free to add your own response to this challenge. The link is: <http://maireadinish.livejournal.com/4349.html>)

Rating: PG (K+)

Warnings: Crackish. I may offend accountants and pygmies. That is not completely intentional. Sorry.

~The Fifth House~

Godric Gryffindor swallowed hard against the discomfort he felt at being here. He didn't want to be in this place, looking for someone who he didn't know, but whose reputation definitely preceded him. The others had insisted, however, that the man was needed. And as the youngest of the four, Godric was often shunted off to do the scut work.

Who else, Helga had asked distractedly as she shuffled building supplies among a dozen overzealous house elves, could they get to organize the stairs needed to both encourage the students to get to class on time and to remain defensible against possible invaders? Moving stairs would be the perfect thing to trip up any invaders, after all. She tended to have rather unusual ideas like that. Salazar had grudgingly admitted that despite his oddities, the man was actually quite brilliant. Rowena had logically added as well, "that many hands make light work" and that, as such, five was

obviously better than four. She was always rather pedantic like that, huffed Godric to himself. No one had actually consulted him.

And so Godric was dispatched to knock on the door of the oddest wizard of the age. He braced himself for what lie ahead, whether he was to be swamped by a surprise attack of half plucked (but otherwise healthy) pigeons, or hexed with gills and a burning desire to eat salmon. Unfortunately, as the man in question never repeated his traps, Godric would just have to be prepared for anything.

And so he raised his hand and knocked. And waited. And waited some more. And then he waited still longer. Finally impatient, the wizard raised his hand to knock again, only to find that his hand stuck to the door and that he was slowly, but surely, being sucked through the wood.

Now, one may not be aware of this, but being sucked through four inches of oak is not a pleasant experience. Particularly, as in this case, he didn't just come through the other side. Rather, he found himself fully sucked into the door, trapped between the outermost layers of wood and fully integrated into the grain, the wood both scratchy and viscous against his skin. It was a bit like being caught in headcheese laced with stone. In other words, decidedly uncomfortable.

Some time later, a few hours perhaps, the owner of the house (hovel? Shack? Cottage? It was hard to tell from inside a door) arrived home. He gave a mighty guffaw and pulled the highly discomfited Godric from the door with one swift tug.

Godric sat huffing on the floor where he had landed and looked up at his still chuckling host. The man was a short wizened man with a long black and silver beard and even

longer hair, incongruously purple. He was dressed in a ragged robe, glitteringly gold, with an exceptionally large and stiff collar, sandals (despite the snow on the ground), and most unusual of all, a jellyfish jauntily perched on his head.

“Patience,” my dear boy, the man croaked in an unusually frog-like voice “Is a vir... Oh, was that a paloon?” The man scampered off to look out the window, leaving Godric sitting open-mouthed on the floor.

“Excuse me, um, sir?” Godric began as, after a moment to collect himself, he rose gracefully to his feet, “I was sent by my colleagues to present to you a proposal. You see...”

“Hush, boy! You’ll attract hosenflies!” The man reprimanded with a hiss. “They always follow paloons. Nasty vermin they are, too.”

“Er, yes, of course... sir.” Godric stammered dismissively, but in a reduced tone. “I have been commissioned by my colleagues to enquire as to whether you would be interested in an intellectual venture of, what we believe, to be of the utmost importance to the future of the wizarding world.”

The man looked at Godric, unimpressed and harrumphed. “So old Sal finally admitted to needing me did he? I assume you’re here about this ‘school’ of yours, is it?”

Godric flushed. It wasn’t just any old school. It was to be a thing of greatness, devoted to the education of witches and wizards until the end of existence. Their names would survive forever as the great founders of the greatest wizarding school ever created. Godric puffed out his chest and opened his mouth to continue. “Yes. I am here to ask you to join us as the fifth founder of Hogwarts School of

Witchcraft and Wizardry.”

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No one really understood how the sorting hat chose members of Uric's house. The hat refused to tell any of the headmasters. Some years, for example, the hat chose every fifth person who donned the hat. Other years, it seemed completely random. One year, an extremely gifted (and apparently very bored) Ravenclaw analyzed fifty years of sortings and determined that the names of those sorted directly and arithmantically equated to the fifth word of every seventh book in the library in the year 1672. This particular Ravenclaw left the wizarding world and became an accountant.

The odd thing is, in its thousand year history, every member of Uric's house, bizarrely named "Henry" considered their life a success. And, even by "normal" standards, they were mostly correct. One wizard, for example, by the name of Tom Riddle, wrapped in the purple and brown of his house, became an ambassador to the Pygmy wizards of southern Chile. It was a real boon for the man and he was much celebrated by his housemates. Until he was eaten. Damn Pygmies.