

The Intentions of Others

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The Intentions of Others

by [BunnyBopper](#)

Summary

Severus Snape knows Lupin is hiding something, but he can be guilty of jumping to conclusions.

Notes

This is my first fic. Hope you enjoy! Comments very much appreciated.

WARNING: homophobic language once

Chapter 1

It was 2pm on Tuesday the 4th of January when Severus Snape found himself in one of the duller staff meetings he could remember. The post-Christmas slump (that even he was not immune to) had made most of them struggle to focus on today's agenda. Even the most irritatingly passionate among them such as Flitwick and Sprout were displaying a lack of enthusiasm. The important topic had been covered – school security; protective enchantment duty was assigned, issues surrounding the dementors were addressed, Sirius Black's most recent sighting was confirmed to be simply Fang having a particularly bad hair day, and, *of course*, the extra measures to ensure the safety of Harry Potter were put in place. Severus was met with the usual sighs and poorly concealed eye rolls when he made his (now bi-weekly) argument that no one student should be singled out for such special treatment. After that, he had slipped into his usual passive-aggressive silence.

They had now moved on to individual issues the professors wished to raise about their own subjects. As headmaster Dumbledore calmly explained, for the third time that afternoon, why divination was not considered 'the very foundation of magical education' and would not be rolled out to first and second years to 'hone their talents from a young age,' Severus felt his mind straying. His thoughts turned to the man he had the misfortune to be sitting across from. The man who had grown from the boy who had literally ran with the pack of his childhood tormentors. The man responsible for the triggering of over a hundred painful memories (memories that Severus had somehow managed to repress) since he arrived to teach the position he was so very underqualified for. Remus Lupin.

Now Severus knew that, for better or worse, he was a quick judge of character. Of course, his natural talent in the art of legilimency made it easy for him to understand the thoughts and intentions of others, though it rarely took the use of this for him to decide that most people were self-absorbed idiots. However, Lupin was one of the few people he had trouble understanding his feelings over. Oh, he hated him obviously, he just wasn't sure if he hated him more or less than the rest of his teenage associates. Technically Lupin had never directly wronged him but neither had he possessed enough Gryffindor bravery to call out the repulsive behaviour of his friends which he so clearly disagreed with. There were not many things Severus hated more than cowardice.

He allowed himself a moment to study him. The years had definitely not been kind. His face showed an unhealthy pale slackness, his thinning and prematurely greying hair was threatening to recede and Severus thought he could see more age lines by the day. Not to mention the new facial scars he had acquired. Severus wondered briefly what the rest of his body looked like under his tattered robes. Though despite all this he had to admit that Lupin still retained some of the soft handsomeness he had possessed in his youth. His elbows rested on the table, palms pressed together as if he was thoughtfully listening though Severus very much doubted he was.

Lupin's eyes flicked briefly towards him as he became aware of Severus' gaze. The man had only ever afforded him the briefest of eye contact during their stiffly polite and only-when-necessary interactions which made Severus certain he had something to hide. He realised he had begun to stare when Lupin shifted and crossed his arms over his lap defensively, betraying his discomfort. Well, what did he care if he made the werewolf nervous? In fact, he actively encouraged it.

Seated to Lupin's right was Professor Sinistra. The pair had certainly become *very* friendly since Lupin had started in the position that, by all logical reasoning, should be his own. As he watched he observed her lean over and whisper something into his ear. Severus felt a sting of irritation at the way she made his eyes crinkle in amusement and the breath exhale from his nose in discreet replacement for laughter. This quickly turned to a hot anger as Sinistra patted his elbow and

allowed her hand to rest there a moment too long. Wait. Were they actually fucking?! Oh, one certainly did not need legilimency to determine HER intentions. Those were blatantly obvious in the way she played with her dark hair and batted her even darker eyes whenever Lupin was around. But would they really both be so....so....unprofessional?!

His indignant stare must have become too intense as Lupin gave him a rare moment of full eye contact. Severus didn't mean to enter his mind but the intensity of what Lupin was feeling was so strong it practically radiated through to him. Desire. Arousal. Merlin, how was the man managing to maintain his composure enough to actually sit through this meeting? Severus was already finding himself hot-under-the-collar just being exposed to it. Lupin looked away before Severus could see any formed thoughts but the object of his feelings seemed pretty clear.

They were fucking then. Why did that piss him off so much? He'd certainly never held any feelings for Sinistra though she was undoubtedly an attractive woman. Hypocrisy. That was something he hated more than cowardice. How could Lupin have the fucking audacity to sit there, in the position that was rightfully Severus', and instead of paying attention he was lusting over a colleague and sporting an absolutely raging –

"No objections from you Severus?"

The sound of his name from Albus Dumbledore snapped him out of his thoughts. He has no idea what he was talking about. Shit.

"I'm sorry?" All eyes were on him now.

"I asked if you had any objections to Madam Hooch's proposal," Albus repeated with that familiar twinkle in his eye. Fuck.

"Ah – of course – no none at all."

A collective confusion spread among the teachers. Oh Merlin, what had he just agreed to?

"Well that's agreed then!" Albus beamed. "The Slytherin quidditch team will give up one of their weekly practice sessions to accommodate Madam Hooch's new outdoor yoga and mindfulness sessions to help students who are struggling with the extra pressures of this difficult year."

Shitfuck.

Severus' rage had reached new heights as the meeting drew to a close and Rolanda took him aside to express her gratitude and offer him 'a private session any time' now she was aware he was 'open to alternative practices'. As he made to swoop from the room the sound of Sinistra's voice made him stop in his tracks.

"Would you be free right now Remus?"

"Well – ah...."

Oh no. This was NOT happening. Not in the middle of the day. Certainly not on school grounds. Granted no student had returned from Christmas break yet but that did not give them the right to –

"I'm so excited to see this grindy low of yours...."

I'll bet you are, Severus thought as he glided over to them.

"Oh, Severus!" Sinistra acknowledged him with surprise. "It's commendable of you to sacrifice

some of your team's practice time. I think it's so important to make room for new things that may help our students."

"Quite."

Lupin cleared his throat. "I have to confess I'm surprised you feel that way, Severus," he said with mildly concealed amusement, all while still avoiding any eye contact.

"Yes, well we all possess hidden depths don't we?" he snapped irritably. "I'm afraid I must steal Lupin away from you Aurora. I have an important matter to discuss with him."

"Couldn't this wait until after dinner Severus?" Lupin asked uncomfortably.

"I'm afraid not. The matter is urgent and rather *delicate*," Severus stressed the final word before stepping between them and ushering Lupin towards the door. He couldn't resist turning to Sinistra before leaving and saying in a lower tone "Don't worry; I'm sure there will be an opportunity to get up-close-and-personal with his grindy low another time."

"Um...I'm sorry what do you mea..." Sinistra began, looking stricken, but Severus was already walking away. He strode ahead of Lupin who didn't appear to have heard. As they walked towards the dungeons he made sure to remain a few steps ahead so the man would be unable to attempt any kind of small talk. Stopping as they reached his classroom door, Severus opened it swiftly and indicated for Lupin to go inside. After they had both entered he took a moment to savour the anxiety in Lupin's face. They were in his domain now.

"Yes Severus, what do you need to speak to me about? Are there problems with the Lycanthropy potion?" Despite his obvious concern Lupin still spoke with the calm and quiet confidence that had begun to so infuriate him over the past few months. Lupin liked to play the role of the caring, compassionate teacher. The one students could sip tea with and spill their worries to. But Severus knew from experience that, when it counted, Remus Lupin could not be relied upon to step up. That's who he truly was. A coward who bent to the will of others purely to satisfy his desperate need to be liked.

"Oh no, that is quite within my skill set," he replied with a cold smile. "I'm afraid this is about a *different* delicate matter. One that nonetheless concerns me greatly."

"Go on."

Oh, he would.

"You see I've heard rumour that people with your –ah- condition can experience certain secondary effects in the week leading up to transformation."

"Which 'secondary effects' would you be referring to?" Lupin asked, "The anxiety? The sleeplessness? The increased urge for rare meat?" smiling as he tried and failed to deflect the tension with humour.

"Well, if you wish me to be blunt Lupin, what I'm referring to is increase in sexual drive," Severus put on his silkiest voice and dialled up the malice a notch. It was true that Severus had heard this rumour. Although he did have cause to doubt its validity as it came from the drunken boasting of one of Greyback's lackeys during a death eater celebration many years ago. But Severus knew the shame Lupin felt about his werewolf status so equating that to his sexual feelings seemed a sure way to break him. He stepped in closer. "I hear some people can find this difficult to control."

Lupin's eyes widened as he unconsciously moved back away from him.

"Hah, well I'm afraid what you've heard is exactly that – rumour," he laughed nervously as he touched the back of his long neck before rubbing his steadily reddening ear.

"Really? Because I would hate for anything to affect the ability to do your job....or your conduct here."

Lupin stiffened.

"My con-? N-Now wait just a minute!"

"You did seem rather distracted by a certain someone during today's meeting," Severus taunted as he advanced further. He was fully enjoying himself now. He paused again to take in the flush that had risen up Lupin's neck. The pale scar tissue patterned there becoming more prominent by contrast.

Severus would have time to psychoanalyse why he was getting hard later. Right now, he was completely focused on his need to torment the other man. Make him squirm. That way at least he would have some shame when he went running off to Sinistra.

"And I assume you've been hoping they could provide you with some – ah – relief from your difficulties," he continued.

Lupin stopped his retreat and gazed at him. "You looked inside my mind," he stated.

"One has to use the talents one has to confirm the intentions of others, especially when the school's reputation is at stake. I mean, we've had our fair share of scandals, but I think this one would take the cake, don't you? Two teachers caught up in an affair involving rampant lunar-induced sex?"

"So what are you saying?"

"I'm saying that I want you to know that I know....and that the other party is more than willing....despite the significant risk."

Time to get him spooked. The fear that Severus might go to the Daily Prophet might just be enough to render him unable to perform tonight.

"But I thought....I didn't think you...." Lupin stuttered out between increasingly rapid breaths. He had backed up so his ass hit the front of the dark oak desk that Severus taught from and he could go no further. Severus wasn't sure what he was babbling on about. Perhaps he was becoming incoherent from stress. Severus squared up to the taller man.

"Well, that..."

When his face was mere inches away from Lupin's he summoned up the cruellest smirk in his arsenal.

"Is where you are sorely mistaken."

It was happening before Severus could register it. Lupin's mouth was on his. His arms wrapped fiercely around his back pulling him into a tight embrace. And Severus was responding to the kiss before he knew what he was doing. His hands had somehow wrapped themselves in Lupin's short, pale hair as the other man's own hands had slid down to his lower back to pull Severus' hips forwards to feel his now impossible-to-conceal erection.

"I didn't think you liked men," Lupin managed to pant out the end of his earlier sentence as they

broke for air. Severus was hardly in the position to deny that now, not even to himself. "I could feel you watching me all through that meeting and I got so fucking worked up..." Lupin continued before kissing him again. Severus could then only watch in stunned shock as Lupin began undoing the many fastenings of his robes "...I thought I was going to have to make my excuses right then and there." Abandoning the last few in frustration he glided his hands over Severus' smooth chest. "But I thought you hated me too much to even..." Lupin's words trailed off as he began to kiss his neck. Severus could only respond in gasps and the occasional stifled moan as the kissing turned to tongue and teeth.

"I –uh-w-wait!" It was Severus' turn to stutter as Lupin spun him by the shoulders so he was the one now pressed up against his own desk. He had to grip the wood with both hands to avoid toppling backward from the force. By the time he'd steadied himself Lupin was already on his knees in front of him. Without pausing from unfastening Severus' trousers Lupin looked up at him and let out a groan before saying-

"Please don't make me wait any longer Severus. I've wanted to do this for so long."

If there was a time to stop this Severus knew it was now, but the moment passed and he let it. It was then too late to protest even if he wanted to as Severus Snape was, possibly for the first time, rendered speechless as he felt the wet heat of Lupin's mouth around his cock. He remained so as the man began to move his head to create a friction that was glorious beyond words. He was not silent however as Lupin began to elicit from him an extremely uncharacteristic chorus of moans.

Amazing what a rush of dopamine could do to a person, Severus reflected as he looked down at the man he had wanted to destroy ten minutes ago. Now he was gazing at him in awe. And was that a swell of affection in his chest? Merlin help him. Lupin's eyes were closed as he worked him using his hands and mouth with a technique that was bordering on erratic. Like he was more focused on the sheer pleasure of the act he was performing than what Severus was feeling. That wasn't a problem though because it felt *so fucking good*. Someone showing such raw desire for him was, until now, an alien concept for Severus. Dear god, this was going to be over humiliatingly quickly.

Perhaps Lupin had sensed he was on the brink because all of a sudden, he stopped. Severus let out a sound somewhere between a whimper and a whine that he had no idea he was capable of making. He would have worried about his reputation if he had been able to worry about anything other than his need to come right-fucking-now. But Lupin was standing up now. For one ridiculous moment, Severus began to think this had all been some Marauder prank that had finally come to fruition after years of planning. He imagined a teenage Potter, Black and Pettigrew were going to appear from beneath their invisibility cloak laughing and jeering with disgust about how they always knew he was a 'fucking fag'. The irrational fear caused Severus to flinch away from Lupin as he was moving in to touch him again.

Then those amber eyes sought his black ones and he saw them - flashes of Lupin's memories. First, his own intense stare looking at him across the staff table not thirty minutes ago. Then a flash of him tucking a strand of dark hair behind his ear as he leaned over his cauldron to perfect the wolfsbane potion the day Lupin came to collect his first dose. Severus hadn't realised how much of his pale collarbone was exposed when he undid the top two buttons of his robes to combat the heat of the rising steam. Better not do that in company again. And then further back still as he saw himself as a teenager laughing at something Lucius had said to a gang of Slytherins in the Great Hall. The accompanied emotions of jealousy and sadness were definitely not his own.

Now they were back in the present. Lupin – no – Remus (he supposed he should think of him in first name terms now) was clasping his hand and studying his face with concern in an attempt to

discern what was wrong. Before he could open his mouth to ask. Before the inevitable – ‘Sorry, this was a mistake...’ – Severus quickly leaned in to initiate a kiss for the first time that afternoon. Lupin’s mouth was still wet and as Severus tasted himself on another person for the first time, he briefly reflected that the experience was less repulsive and far more erotic than he’d ever anticipated.

The time for reflection passed as the passion between them was rekindled almost instantly with Remus responding even more enthusiastically than before. As he moved to kiss the collarbone he was apparently so enamoured with, Severus heard himself speak before the words could register.

"I don't hate you."

Remus snickered softly into his neck making Severus shudder at the warmth of his breath.

"Well I'm certainly glad to hear that," he responded before turning to look at Severus again. He smiled his kind smile at him as he moved his hand up to brush away the hair that had fallen in front of Severus' face before running a thumb over his bruised bottom lip. Something seemed to snap in Remus then as one hand began frantically undoing the lower half of his robes while the other that was still holding Severus' own began pulling him south. "Oh fuck, please touch me, Severus...I need you to..."

Severus hesitated again for a moment. It wasn't a lack of willingness. Right now he wanted nothing more than to make Remus feel as good as he himself had just felt. He WANTED to touch him, it was just, well...nobody would win any prizes for guessing that Severus Snape didn't get laid very often. Ok, he didn't get laid at all. Oh, he'd had his fair share of sexual debauchery in his death eater days. Lucius used to take him to a specific 'gentlemen only' establishment in the seediest part of Knockturn alley where the women there seemed only too happy to accommodate the will of two of the highest-ranking members of The Dark Lord's inner circle. Self-preservation on their part he later supposed, but at the time it felt like the validation he so desperately craved after a childhood shaped by rejection. Things, as they so often did when Lucius was involved, sometimes turned to the borderline macabre, and being exposed to that kind of sex at such a young age had, of course, shaped Severus' feelings towards it. The result being that he now associated it with the worst parts of himself.

Then after the war – after he lost Lily – Severus had had no interest in pursuing anyone or anything of that nature. He told himself it was beneath him but deep down he knew it was because he felt unworthy. The biological urge arose of course but Severus took care of it with the same attitude he took towards maintaining any other part of his body. His very real fear now was that he wouldn't possess enough skill or passion to make Remus feel what he wanted him to. Not to mention he'd never been with another man before....

Stop overthinking, Severus chastised himself, just let something good happen to you for once!

His fears proved unfounded as he grasped Remus in his hand. Something clicked into place as he felt the man's hard length, so like him and yet so different. Severus soon adjusted to the unfamiliar angle and built a rhythm so he was able to focus on Remus' reaction. Surely this was disproportionate to what he was doing? He was writhing and sighing and kissing and moaning Severus' name along with a string of expletives. It wasn't long before Remus was thrusting into his hand uncontrollably. Perhaps Severus had managed to pass off his earlier nervous hesitation as a more characteristic cruel teasing. Speaking of....

Severus slowed things down to a torturous pace and carefully avoided the most sensitive part of Remus for now. He smirked as he was rewarded with frustrated groans, repeated begging, and more curse words that were beginning to sound really fucking sexy coming from the normally so

composed man. They kissed again and while he was distracted Remus moved in to resume his hold on Severus' cock. All thought for teasing disappeared as Severus began to unconsciously move the hand on Remus faster due to his own desperate need to climax. Pretty soon it was happening. Each man moaning into the other's mouth as they rode the intense pleasure of their release.

Neither of them possessed enough blood in the muscles of their legs to remain up right now. Severus placed his full weight back against his desk and Remus slumped on top of him. He reached his arms up around Remus' back to support him in a close embrace as he listened to him let out a string of 'thank-you's and 'so good's. They stayed like that for some time. Severus' mind was finally free of introspection and filled only with closeness and connection.

The calmness didn't last for long however as the enormity of what they had both done hit Severus and Remus at the same time when they finally pulled away from each other. There they stood in an unprotected, unsilenced classroom in the middle of the day – hair dishevelled, lips bruised, clothes half-on-half-off. He hadn't even locked the door! Severus realised as they quickly fumbled themselves back in the confines of their robes and vanished the evidence of their deed that was covering them both. Lupin turned from him and quickly walked straight out the door. Standing alone Severus was surprised to find the cold sense of dread in his stomach quickly turn to the intense yet familiar pain of rejection. So that was it, he thought. Now it was over Remus was done with him and he was too disgusted to even give him a parting look.

But after several moments he was back, stuffing some parchment into his back pocket and pointedly locking the door behind him before looking at Severus with an embarrassed grin.

"I'm pretty sure we got away with it. The dungeons are completely deserted. Even Peeves is up in the astronomy tower."

Severus wasn't sure how Lupin would have had the time to discern that or how he could be so certain that the howler announcing their instant dismissal wasn't about to come sliding under the door. He decided not to question it though as he wasn't sure whether the relief he was feeling was due to the fact they seemed to be safe or that Remus had returned. As Severus began to reflect on his feelings yet again Remus casually strode up to him and placed a chaste kiss on his lips. One that felt incongruent to the kind they had just been doing.

"Next time we do this we'll be more careful," Remus said, his hand resting on Severus' waist, "and I'll take it slower."

Next time! The arrogance! Did he just assume this was going to be a regular thing between them? Well OK yes that is *exactly* what Severus had unintentionally implied when he dragged Remus into his classroom earlier. He opened his mouth to set the record straight and take the werewolf down a peg or two for good measure. So he was again surprised when all that came out was a single word.

"Tonight?"

Remus smiled that lopsided easy smile of his, a smile which no longer sparked rage in Severus but an entirely new though just as intense feeling, and laughed.

"I think I can summon up the energy. Never imagined you to have such an insatiable nature, Severus," he said slyly.

Well, Remus wasn't the only one discovering new things about him, Severus thought in a daze. It took a while to shoo him out of his classroom between Remus pulling him in for 'just one more' kiss and muttering about all the things he would do to him later that evening. When he was finally alone Severus leaned against the back of his door and let out a long exhale as he slid down onto the

floor. Placing his elbows on his knees and his head in his hands he sat down to process. This could take some time.

Chapter 2

Chapter Summary

Severus and Remus have their first night together after a slightly awkward dinner.

Chapter Notes

This was going to be a stand alone fic but I was having way too much fun with this pairing as well as this whole fanfic writing business. Thanks to everyone who read so far and who left kudos! More chapters to follow.

Even during the holidays, Headmaster Dumbledore insists that all the teachers take their evening meal together whenever possible. The 'whenever possible' does not apply to Severus Snape however as Albus insists he *always* dines with the rest to combat his 'natural tendency for isolation'. That evening Severus tried every excuse in the proverbial book to get out of it but eventually, the headmaster's serene smile no longer reached his eyes and he knew from experience it was unwise to argue. That was the reason he now ended up in the slightly awkward position of eating dinner next to his boyhood enemy, workplace rival, and (as of two hours and forty minutes ago) lover.

"No appetite Severus?"

The sound of Minerva's clipped voice made Severus look up from pushing beef stew around his plate. Well, he hadn't actually done much eating of his dinner. Every mouthful seemed to take an age to chew and the tightness of his throat was making swallowing near impossible so he had admitted defeat several minutes ago.

"It seems to have left me I'm afraid."

Could he make some excuse about being unwell and get out of there? No, one look from Albus told him he was in it for the duration. Minerva was also looking at him with a sternly furrowed brow that Severus knew was her version of concern. All the teachers were used to him being quiet during meals but he could usually be counted upon to make a sarcastic comment or complain about the overdone carrots. The reason he had not done so this evening was due to him being too focused on ensuring that no part of his body touched Remus Lupin's to make any attempt at joining the conversation. Why couldn't the man have bloody well got here earlier so that he could have sat somewhere other than the only remaining seat which was, as always, next to Severus.

He allowed himself a brief glance at Remus who appeared to be managing just fine as he piled an extra helping of potatoes on his plate. Perhaps he knew he would need the extra energy for whatever he was going to do to him later. Oh God.

The other reason was that Severus couldn't shake the feeling that everybody knew exactly what he and Remus had got up to following the earlier staff meeting. Although he knew the conversations always steered to more adult topics when the students were gone he was starting to think it was happening tonight to deliberately raise his blood pressure. Particularly when it began to steer towards suspected past dalliances between faculty members.

"Oh, they definitely were. Remember when I saw them sneaking out of the supply cupboard on the second floor?" Flitwick was gleefully recounting his story of the time he almost caught Professor Kettleburn and Madam Pomfrey in the midst of a heavy petting session. He was ruddy-faced and glassy-eyed and Severus knew the small man had overindulged in a third glass of mead as he often did on such occasions.

"Well you do know all the good places, Phineus," Sprout jibed playfully, causing an uproar of laughter throughout the table. She and the charms professor's on-off relationship was well-known and a frequent source of mirth for the teachers. The reason Severus had to suppress a smirk, however, was that he had noticed Sinistra trying – and failing- to catch Remus' eye at the comment. He still could not believe that Remus wasn't infatuated with the beautiful witch. The one with grace and style and in possession of a personality not tinged with bitterness and a wit not dripping with sarcasm. He was infatuated with him. Severus Snape! The man who could clear the staff room during morning coffee break with the right glare and reduce first years to tears when he misjudged a remark and cut too deep.

None of it made any logical sense and Severus had always relied on logic to understand both himself and others. Perhaps that had something to do with his lack of relationships – platonic or otherwise. Up until now, that is. Severus felt his stomach flip and the heat rise in his face as his mind went back to the events of that afternoon. And he'd asked him to come back tonight! What on earth had he been thinking?

"Are you sure you're feeling alright Severus? You're looking a tad flushed."

"I'm fine thank-you, Minerva. Just a little under the weather."

"What about Slughorn and Merrythought? The students in my year always suspected something between them." Now Remus had finished his mountain of stew and potatoes he was apparently ready to join in. Severus caught his eye before giving him the briefest of warning looks.

"Don't be ridiculous Slughorn is as gay as a pygmy puff!" Flitwick guffawed loudly.

"Really? I had no idea," Remus responded thoughtfully.

"Me 'either!" piped Hagrid looking astounded. The half-giant's cluelessness was no surprise to anyone causing another burst of boisterous laughter from the table.

"Guess some of you need to tune your gaydars," remarked Hooch using the muggle term which had somehow entered the wizarding world despite half of the population never having heard of radar in the first place. Her preference for witches was also well known to the others. Oh no. The last thing Severus needed was his colleagues to start contemplating people's orientations. He hadn't even had time to fully contemplate his own yet!

"Honestly Severus you look dreadful! You're pure white now." Why had Minerva picked tonight to fuss over him?

Remus swiftly reached over and placed the back of his palm on Severus' forehead. The unexpected touch caused him to leap from his chair as though he had been hit with a stinging hex. Everyone

turned to look at him in surprise.

"You are rather hot Severus," Remus said with an acting skill Severus never knew he possessed. He was loving this, the bastard.

"Yes –uh- I think I'll take my leave. Goodnight everyone. Headmaster." He nodded to Albus without meeting his eye.

"Goodnight Severus. I do hope you feel better soon. There are only a few more days to engage in frivolity before the students return!"

He could never tell if Dumbledore actually knew everything or just acted like he did.

It was 9:20 pm and Severus had been pacing the length of his quarters since 8. He had been doing a lot of thinking. Thinking thinking thinking. His already quick mind was running at top speed since the events of dinner and he was going round in circles. He tried to keep those thoughts far from Lily as thinking about her now after having engaged in mutual masturbation with one of her closest friends felt like the worst betrayal of his life. But no matter how much he pushed them away they would return as she was the key piece in the puzzle that was his sexuality.

If he was gay what did that mean for his feelings for her? He knew he loved her. Completely. Always would. But had he mistaken the love of the closest of friendships for something else? She was a girl, he was a boy. That was how he *should* have felt. His father would certainly have thought so. Or was he simply bisexual? Knowing Severus he would later spend hours determining where exactly he fell on the Kinsey scale – complete with graphs and charts.

What he has managed to conclude was that he had always been attracted to members of his own sex. Everything made sense now. From the way he had to fight down his own arousal whenever he heard the muffled moans and excessive duvet moving from behind the closed curtains of one of his dorm-mates' four-poster late in the night, to why he'd so enjoyed being potions partners with that geekily handsome Ravenclaw Rodney Higgins. Wait, had Rodney liked him too? Severus contemplated the way the boy used to flush and look away whenever he complimented the way he cut up his shrivelfig or added his salamander blood. The way he would jerk away from him when their hands brushed awkwardly when reaching for the same ingredient.

But Severus wasn't a teenager anymore. So why on earth was he acting like one? After dinner, he had bathed to within an inch of his life in preparation for whatever was about to unfold. He'd never spent more time fussing over his appearance and he had become increasingly frustrated by what he saw reflected back in the mirror. He had then agonised over what to wear. Why did all his clothes have so many bloody buttons? He settled on a loose white undershirt and hoped it wouldn't wash out his pasty, sallow complexion too much. Why was he so concerned about impressing him anyway? Severus thought as he dismantled his extensive personal library in hope of finding any reading on sex between men. What he had found had only caused his anxiety to threaten to push into full-blown panic so he abandoned his task and had now confined himself to pacing and waiting.

9:45 pm – Maybe Remus wasn't coming? The small amount of relief he felt at the prospect was overshadowed by worry. Why wasn't he coming? Was he sick? Was there some kind of emergency? Had he finally come to his senses and realised he could do so much better than Severus Snape? Just then he was dragged out of the rabbit hole of possibilities by a quiet knock on the door. Severus froze. Oh Merlin this was it.

He needed more time to prepare! He needed to brew some kind of confidence-boosting potion. But all of those took days! Before he could talk himself out of it Severus rushed forward to open the

door. Remus was standing there looking almost as nervous as he was, all post-coital bravado apparently forgotten. As they looked at each other Severus instantly pictured that face contorted with pleasure as it had been earlier. Remembered the feel of his mouth, his tongue, his-

"Ah- can I come in?" Remus asked, smiling a shy awkward smile.

"Oh-uh-yes! Yes of course," Severus stepped aside to allow the man to enter. He too seemed to have put some extra effort into his appearance. He had on his least threadbare shirt and his only well-fitting pair of dark brown trousers. A wasted effort for now as Severus firmly kept his eyes anywhere other than Remus' trouser region. He also seemed to be carrying something at his side.

"Sorry, it took a while for all the rambunctiousness to quieten down," Remus said apologetically as Severus turned to ensure the door was double-locked and all extra cloaking enchantments were still in place. He chose not to respond to that as he was unsure if he had forgiven Remus for his earlier behaviour yet and was still slightly unnerved by the man's ability to maintain his own composure. As Severus turned back to face him he was able to see that what Remus was carrying was a bottle containing what looked like a very good quality red wine. "I wasn't sure whether to bring anything but I –er- thought you would like this," he continued before shyly handing it over. "But we don't have to drink it tonight of course."

Severus didn't know what was more cliché – Remus' offering or his own giddy feelings that were sparked by how accurately the man had judged his tastes. Yes! This was exactly what he needed, Severus realised as he whisked himself over to his drinks cabinet, Dutch courage! He was grateful to have something to do as he selected two wine glasses (silently thanking Merlin that he even possessed two as he certainly didn't make a habit of inviting people down to his quarters very often) before slowly making his way back to the pair of dark green armchairs in one of which Remus now sat. Severus placed the bottle and glasses on the low table between them and sat down lightly in the adjacent armchair that he had spent at least ten minutes arranging into the perfect position earlier that evening.

After Remus had uncorked the bottled and poured out the dark burgundy liquid (taking charge already apparently) Severus drank deeply but resisted the urge to down the entire glass. It really was remarkably fine wine. After some obligatory conversation about it – "Goblin made."

"Fascinating." – they slipped into painfully awkward silence. Severus really needed to snap out of this. Where was his razor-sharp wit? He was certainly capable of using charm to manipulate others when he wanted to. He needed to say something. Something that would knock Remus off his feet. But the other man got there first.

"So, do you make a habit of seducing the new Defence Against the Dark Arts teacher every year or....?"

Severus couldn't hold in his laughter and the tension eased between them. Remus couldn't keep the triumph from showing on his face at his achievement.

"Oh yes," Severus responded in his go-to sarcastic drawl. "The man who had Voldemort on the back of his head made things particularly interesting." Wait, was that joke too dark for Remus? Severus' usually perfect filter seemed to be faulty. But Remus was exploding with laughter allowing Severus to sit back with relief.

"At least Lockhart was a handsome man."

"I prefer someone who can string a sentence together without referring to that fact. Anyway, I've never actually asked you what you thought of the position."

The brief look of confusion on Remus' face betrayed the fact that his mind must have first gone to an altogether different definition of the word 'position' before coming to his senses. He coughed into his hand before answering.

"Well, teaching is still relatively new to me but I think I've been able to bring a certain level of insight to the subject. And I enjoy working with young people, that part is very rewarding."

Severus couldn't help but roll his eyes at that before taking another large sip of wine. He was beginning to relax now but he still needed to loosen up a lot more before Remus pounced on him again, and who knew when that would be?

"I take it you don't agree?" Remus asked, one eyebrow raised in mock surprise.

"Perhaps I would have ten years ago, but if you end up teaching as long as I have you may find yourself forming the opinion that Hogwarts would run far better without it's students."

"Possibly, I don't imagine it would be as interesting though."

"Really? How about I tell you some of the more *interesting* situations I've encountered. If only to prepare you for what's to come."

The conversation turned into Severus relaying some of the more idiotic things his students had done over the years leading to various mishaps and some outright catastrophes. Severus had just finished his story about an incident six years ago when a fourth-year Gryffindor boy tried to impress a Hufflepuff girl by adding double the amount of powdered griffin claw to his strengthening solution. The resulting explosion caused a massive fight to break out due to the unwanted side effect of high aggression. He'd had to immobilise the entire class but not before said Hufflepuff girl got in a well-aimed punch to his face.

"It's not funny. She broke my nose!" he chastised with exaggerated indignance as Remus let out his low, hoarse laugh. He reached to pour them the last of the wine before adding "and no comments about it being an easy target thank-you." Severus was beginning to think Remus was simply enjoying listening as he gazed at him with an easy smile on his face, his eyes lingering occasionally on Severus' mouth as he spoke.

"Well I suppose teenagers can be a little overbearing at times," he said, still chuckling softly. His laughter trailed off and he stared into his glass before continuing. "Listen, Severus, I've been wanting to apologise to you...for the way we treated you in school....It wasn't....I shouldn't have let-"

"Please let's not do this." Great. Just as he had begun to contemplate making the first move Remus had to go and verbally punch him in the gut. Of all the insensitive-

"No, please. I was a coward. When I said earlier I thought you hated me I never meant that you didn't have good reason to."

Severus felt a flair of anger. Where had this sudden self-awareness come from? Did Remus only feel the need to alleviate his guilt now he'd gotten some?

"Well I'm willing to re-evaluate my stance if you don't drop this," he said in a dangerous tone. Remus looked taken aback and slightly panicked as he apologised and told Severus to forget he said anything. Severus couldn't bring himself to respond for fear of saying something he'd regret and kept his eyes firmly on the floor.

First you're primping like a teenager and now you're sulking like one, he angrily told himself,

what's next? Writing his name in love hearts all over your desk?

After several moments, Remus appeared to admit defeat. He stood up mumbling something about having had a 'pleasant evening' before turning to leave. Severus just had time to rise and grab him by the forearm before pulling the man back towards him. The wine made the words and emotion behind them come easily.

"Don't go."

That was all it took. They were on each other now. Hands digging in so they left marks, mouths pushed so hard together it was blissfully painful. Severus was tugging at Remus' shirt. He obediently lifted his arms to allow it to be pulled over his head. Severus took a moment to take in his scarred torso which triggered feelings of sympathy and desire in equal measure. He listened to Remus gasp as he buried his face in his shoulder and bit down while moving his hands up to feel the smooth curve of his shoulder blades.

Then they were moving, kissing and stumbling, towards Severus' bedroom (which was of course already pre-lit to the most flattering of lightings). When they reached his plain four-poster Remus pushed him down upon it before crawling on top of him. He helped Severus sit up and remove his own shirt before gazing intently at what he saw as if he wanted to commit it to memory. As if he might disappear at any moment.

Severus had always felt on some level that being with anyone would be an insult to Lily's memory. That being alone was his punishment for what he'd done to her. He deserved that and more. But Lily was so kind. She would want this happiness for him. And that's what this feeling was, he realised. It was the feeling that had been threatening to overwhelm him since he'd looked into Remus' mind earlier and felt what he felt.

Remus was kissing him deliberately now, one hand cupping his jaw to pull him in deeper. He had no idea kissing could feel like this. That it could stop everything so there was only this moment. After that, allowing himself to let go was easy.

Remus moved downwards trailing his lips across his chest and occasionally stopping to place those slow kisses on his skin. When he reached the lower half of his stomach, he etched down Severus' trousers so they were past his hip bones. As he ghosted his lips over the trail of hair leading downwards he began to brush his hand against Severus' cock through the fabric. Severus arched his back and groaned enjoying the frustration of it. Remus hadn't been lying about taking things slowly earlier.

"Merlin, you look so fucking good," Remus was moaning into his crotch now. There he went again with the cursing that apparently turned Severus on so much.

He'd slid Severus' trousers and underwear down fully now before removing them completely. Severus braced himself for the pleasure of Remus' mouth around him only to find the man suddenly back on top. He had time to marvel at how good the feeling of the bare skin of his chest was against his own before Remus was pushing Severus' legs apart with his knees before sliding down his own trousers. The desire Severus felt at the feeling of Remus' full hardness against him was overtaken by a wave of fear and rising panic.

"Wait! Wait, I - I need to tell you - I've never -"

"You've never been topped before? That's alright we can switch. You'll find I can be very versatile...." Remus growled in a mock exaggeration of seduction.

"What?! No! Listen to me you absolute cretin. I'm saying I've never done this before!" He snapped, hating how vulnerable he had to be right now. Remus' predatory look gave way to one of clueless incomprehension. Severus sighed in frustration. 'You know! This!' he inclined his head at the closeness of their bodies. "With a man at least."

"Are you serious? But earlier you were so....and just now...."

Severus looked away, mortified, not wanting to see Remus' look of horror.

"I just needed to be clear with you."

He wasn't sure if the man was worried about his lack of experience or that he'd taken things too far too fast. Knowing Remus it was probably the latter which somehow made Severus feel worse.

"That's ok!" he was now saying in his most reassuring tone, "That's no problem. We don't have to do that yet-at all even! And we don't have to do anything more tonight. We could just talk more and-"

"Oh will you stop being so bloody patronising!" Severus said in frustrated exasperation. He grasped Remus by the torso and flipped him on to his back before straddling him and pinning his arms at his side.

"I just want you to be comfortable!" he said with the same irritating tone while trying and failing to sit up.

"Well maybe I don't want to be comfortable anymore! Maybe I'm sick of closing my mind off to everything and feeling nothing!"

Remus was still now. He was looking at Severus as if gaining a new understanding of him. Severus could see a flicker of sadness at his confession.

"Please....just let me...." He went on.

"Ok. But you have to promise me you'll stop if it gets too much."

Severus rolled his eyes for the second time that evening but briefly nodded his agreement before moving in to feel Remus. Severus wasn't a submissive man. On the contrary, he generally liked to be in control in all situations. Other than the obvious benefits of being a proficient legilimens while a double agent in the Wizarding War, a big part of the reason why he had worked so hard to hone his skills was to protect himself from others. To be able to see their intentions and feelings towards him so he could always gain the upper hand and to shield his emotions from those who would use them against him.

But that night he wanted-he needed-to fully connect with another person. No. Not just anyone. It had to be Remus. Kind, gentle, patient Remus. Always putting others before himself and seeing the good in people. He realised the man was so like her, his dearest friend, in so many ways.

He began by mimicking what Remus had just done. He knew it felt good for him so the reverse would likely be true. His hypothesis proves correct judging by the light moans Remus makes as he grazes his lips over the man's scarred chest and continues to pin his arms lightly but firmly by his side. He experiments using his tongue, his teeth and is met with continued positive responses. As he does so he moves one of the hands holding Remus in place down to grasp hold of his cock for the second time that day.

Severus works him slowly as he moves down the man's body inch by inch, wanting his mouth to

come into contact with as much of his skin as possible. When he gets to Remus' hips he spends the same amount of time there – licking, biting sucking. He runs his free hand up and down Remus' thigh.

He's groaning openly now, muttering words of encouragement, grabbing handfuls of Severus' hair and holding it from his face to better see what he's doing. Severus realises he might have been procrastinating slightly due to his understandable apprehensiveness. He can't anymore though. The want is too great. He takes Remus into his mouth.

Severus would be the first to admit he didn't know what he was doing but he hoped his enthusiasm would make up for this. He lets Remus guide him with his words, his hands, his movements. Soon this guidance falls by the wayside as he seems to decide Severus is doing just fine on his own. His eyes are closed, head thrown back, face so tight with pleasure he looks almost in pain. He tries to pull away but Severus won't let him.

"Oh fuck, Severus I'm gonna..."

He presses his full weight on the man's hips. He keeps Remus in place as he releases into his mouth, letting out the most guttural of groans. He doesn't stop until Remus is pulling him off. Then Severus is up, completely undone, thrusting against Remus' hip and with barely any help from him, he's coming onto his stomach with a prolonged cry.

Remus cradles him when it's over. Severus knows he should tell him to leave before morning. He doesn't.

Chapter 3

Chapter Summary

Severus tries to lay down some rules but this proves more difficult than he expects.

After the students returned and their affair showed no signs of stopping Severus made sure to lay out some strict ground rules. Rule 1: He and Remus were to act professional AT ALL TIMES. That meant Remus wasn't to make eyes at him over breakfast or drag in into unused classrooms for a quick groping. Rule 2: absolutely no fornication on school grounds EVER AGAIN. They had been lucky so far but it was only a matter of time, and anyway, it was beyond inappropriate. Rule 3: They would say NOTHING to NO-ONE. Severus didn't need any rumours going round he was involved with someone. The thought of anyone knowing he was with another man and that man was Remus Lupin of all people was too much to bear at the moment.

Severus lasted exactly 8 days, 10 hours and 47 minutes before he broke rule 1.

It had happened during the thirty-minute window he had between teaching 3rd year Slytherin-Gryffindors (his worst class for obvious reasons) and 1st year Ravenclaw-Hufflepuffs. He'd had to go to his stores to replenish his stock of snake fangs after Longbottom had added sixteen instead of the instructed six to his Wideeye potion. He claimed Malfoy had defaced his textbook but, well, there was no proof of that and Severus saw no need to investigate further. Especially as he had managed to put out the fire in the boy's hair in time before it reached his scalp.

Severus had just finished gathering the replacements as well as a few extra valerian sprigs and mistletoe berries he was running low on. He paused briefly before leaving to sigh and reflect on just how tired he was. He'd been getting very little sleep since the day Remus had jumped his bones just under two weeks ago. Severus hadn't been getting off until the early hours, his mind constantly working to make sense of the other man's feelings as well as his own.

But his mind wasn't the only thing preventing his sleep. Since their first night together Severus had experienced a sexual awakening, unlike anything he'd allowed himself to have in his youth. Since his self-induced Remus embargo he had been touching himself with a fervency he'd never known before. He'd repeatedly bring himself to the edge before stopping to prolong the feeling that it was Remus who was touching him. That he could feel his mouth, his hands, his skin against him. That he could run his fingers through his hair before roughly grabbing a handful, pulling his head back and...

He was thankful when the spell of his fantasy was broken by a knock on the supply cupboard door. He was less thankful when the person on the other side was Remus himself.

"Severus! What a lucky surprise to find you already here!" Remus said brightly, looking not in the least bit surprised.

"Lupin. What exactly can I do for you?" he responds as curtly as possible but is unable to prevent a hint of wariness from slipping into his voice. The side of Remus' mouth curved upwards in the briefest of smirks that said Severus knew exactly what he could do for him.

"Embarrassingly I've run out of algae to feed my grindylow. I could go out to the lake to get some

but I have a class to teach in five minutes. He gets very disruptive when he's hungry you see. So I was wondering if you had any in your stores? I'll replace it of course."

Severus gave him a look that said he was unconvinced but relented.

"Yes. Fine. Just allow me to..."

"Actually could you direct me to it? He's rather fussy and I'll be able to pick out what he would like."

He eyed the man again, this time with a mixture of irritation and mistrust, before stepping back to allow him to enter. Remus slipped past through the doorway, turning his body to face him but ensuring no part of them touched. Severus closed the door in fear someone would see them in a small space together before realising what a bloody stupid thing that was to do.

"Amazing assortment you have in here," Remus said looking around the room dimly lit with a few enchanted candles. Severus refused to take him on.

"Just what exactly are you playing at Remus?" He said in an outraged whisper.

"I don't know what you mean," the man responded innocently. "I told you my-"

"If you mention your ridiculous grindy low one more time I swear I'll..."

But Severus never got to tell Remus what he would do as words failed him when he was suddenly so very close, and looking breath-taking in the candlelight, and leaning in towards him...and... Severus was pulling him in for a rough kiss before he knew it. All the times he'd relived the experience over the past week couldn't compare to how perfect the man's mouth felt against his. He opened his mouth and Remus responded in kind allowing the kiss to deepen.

Severus moved his hands down Remus' shoulders to take hold of both his wrists, intending to pull them up above his head before he slammed Remus into the opposite shelf. Before he could, however, the feeling of something unpleasantly moist and slimy in the man's right hand caused him to pause. Remus smiled as he held up a particularly disgusting handful of blanket weed. Severus realised he had been standing right in front of it when Remus had leaned in to reach past him.

"Severus! What about your rules?" Remus asked with mock incredulity.

"You...you vile-you knew exactly what you were doing!"

"I would never disrespect your boundaries like that Severus."

He stormed out leaving the insufferable incubus to drip pond water all over his floor and abandoned his much needed ingredients. If a bright Ravenclaw or eager Hufflepuff's education suffered it was on Remus.

Severus was still seething after class when he visited the staff room for a much needed coffee. The other teachers there seemed to sense it was not an occasion for pleasantries and thankfully gave him a wide berth. He sat down in his preferred chair and reached for a copy of today's Daily Prophet. As he did he felt his stomach drop at the sound of Sinistra announcing her presence by

laughing loudly at something Remus had said (that probably wasn't that funny) as they both entered the room. Seriously when was he going to put the woman out of her misery? *Women are wonderful but I'm afraid seeing them naked does very little for me*, Remus had told him on one of their nights together when Severus had quizzed him on his sexuality and experiences. He couldn't quite bring himself to ask about the men before him but, after Remus went on to blow more than just Severus' mind, he guessed he had a fair number of notches on his bedpost.

Though he supposed Remus didn't really have a choice but to speak with her, Severus reflected as the two of them sat down on the sofa directly across from him, as every time he tried to engage Severus in public conversation he was met with blunt, one-word answers. He buried his face in his paper as Remus raised a hopeful hand in greeting towards him, Sinistra seemed content to pretend he wasn't there. Severus found himself unable to focus on any of the articles as he couldn't help listening to their inane chatter and Sinistra's shameless flirting. He was becoming more irritated by the minute when suddenly an idea hit him. Technically it wasn't breaking any rules. He went over the conversation he and Remus had late one night as they lay in bed.

"I felt it you know. That day in your classroom...when you looked inside my memories," Remus had said into the darkness. The haze of afterglow Severus was under was snatched away by fear. He chose his words carefully.

"Remus I..I apologise. I didn't-Sometimes I can't control it. Not often, not any more, but sometimes when things are...intense...it just happens."

"I'm not angry. I don't have anything to hide...not now anyway. I just-"

"I swear to you I'll never do it again. Well, not intentionally at least."

There was a pause.

"Hmm, I wouldn't go so far as to say you should *never* do it again..." Remus said as he turned to face him. Severus couldn't see his playful smirk in the darkness but he could feel it.

"What are you talking about?"

"It could be interesting...in certain situations..."

"Are you telling me you have a legilimens kink? Is that what this has all been about?" Severus asked sarcastically as he climbed on top of the man.

"I just said it could be interesting!" Remus protested as Severus began to trace his lips against his but deny any full contact.

"Well I'll keep that in mind." He said after finally allowing Remus to kiss him.

"Did you just make a pun?"

"Definitely not."

The other teachers had deemed it safe to sit near Severus now they had Lupin as a backup. As Severus sat there eyeing the conversation over his paper he began to think that perhaps this was a situation where it would be interesting. Remus was currently responding to a question from Professor Vector about what new dark creature he was planning to bring into his class as a visual aid.

"Well we're due to cover kappas next but I'm having a bit of trouble acquiring one. Not as easy as a boggart to come across in the castle!" he says to a ripple of laughter.

Any guilt he was feeling about what he was about to do evaporated when he was reminded about the boggart incident. He spoke up.

"I would have thought your class would have advanced further by now, Lupin."

Remus looks at him surprised yet apparently pleased to be spoken to even if Severus is being critical. That eye contact is all Severus needs. He's out of practice of putting thoughts into the minds of others but he can recall the basics. He'd start small.

"Well I try t-" Remus stumbled over his response as he was hit with a mental image of the two of them tangled up in each other, panting and moaning. "...to work at the pace my class needs."

"I see...how *accommodating*. But are you certain you'll be able to cover everything?" All Remus had to do to stop this was to break eye contact but he held it fast. He'd have to up his game.

"I'm sure we'll-" Remus cleverly disguised his sharp intake of breath as a sudden cough as Severus shared with him a memory of himself alone in his quarters the night before last. The moment when he was frantically breathing Remus' name, seconds before he came all over himself. "...I'm sure we'll cover all that and more. They already have an excellent grasp of the basics, not to mention practical skills," he continued somehow managing to keep his polite smile in place. Merlin, the man was good. The other teachers were quiet now, perhaps in anticipation of an argument.

"How nice that you have such confidence in their abilities."

He risked sharing the fantasy he'd been having all week. The one where Remus was under him and begging to be fucked just as he thrust into him. They hadn't done that yet, hadn't even talked about it since that first awkward encounter, but Severus knew he wanted it now and was sure the other man did too.

Remus breaks eye contact then. After a beat he looks back and somehow manages to convey with the briefest of looks that although he was very much into this, it was becoming too much and things were getting a little...dangerous.

"I'm always grateful for the advice of other teachers though Severus. Especially those as experienced as yourself. Perhaps we could get together sometime and I could run some things past you?"

Dammit. He couldn't exactly say no without losing face. *Severus Snape is happy to criticise your teaching but can't offer you anything constructive when it comes down to it.*

"Certainly Lupin. Feel free to visit me in my quarters anytime."

How had the man managed to win this? Severus swiftly finished his coffee and began to make his exit. As he was leaving he heard Sinistra's voice.

"Don't let him get to you," she said reassuringly.

"I'm afraid that's proving quite impossible." Remus replied.

As soon as he'd left the staff room Severus had gone straight to his quarters and right into his shower in an attempt to dampen some of his arousal. He discovered this didn't work after he'd tried and failed to restrain himself. The problem was he couldn't get Remus out of his mind. Well, he probably could if he tried. He was an expert in closing it off after all. Which meant the problem really was that he didn't want to.

What had the man done to him? Severus thought after he'd come hard, his head pressed against the tiles and water running into his open mouth which was trying to regain control of his breathing. This wasn't him. He was becoming certain this wasn't even normal.

Later that evening, Severus tried to distract himself from the unpleasant mixture of guilt, anxiety and elation he was feeling. He began by tackling the steadily growing pile of essays he'd been neglecting. This proved rather effective as he was able to direct all his frustration at the sheer stupidity of most of his students. Honestly, how many times had he told his fourth years the exact properties of the Girding potion? What did he have to do to get it through their thick- His thoughts were interrupted by a quiet knock on the door. It can't be Remus. Surely even he wouldn't be so brazen as to come tonight?

Of course it was Remus, he thinks as he opens the door. The man hadn't exactly been one to play hard-to-get so far.

"Severus! I thought I would take you up on your offer tonight if it's not inconvenient?"

Severus was just about to tell Remus what he could do with his 'offer' when he looked down at the sound of a small meow. Mrs Norris was standing between them and had begun wrapping herself around Remus' legs. Severus was briefly surprised that a cat would show such affection for a werewolf before he realised that wherever Mrs Norris was, Filch was sure to follow. Sure enough the caretaker soon shuffled around the corridor carrying his lantern.

He couldn't risk making a scene then. Though he and Argus had always been on good terms he was much bitterer and certainly more twisted than Severus ever could be. He had no doubt the man would go running to Dumbledore with glee if he had even the slightest suspicion that something untoward was going on.

"Professors!" he called out as he saw them before advancing. "I've had to increase my patrols of the castle in the evenings. The students have been getting up to more and more nasty business."

"What sort of business?" Remus enquired. Filch gave him a look of outrage to see he had picked up Mrs Norris who was purring happily in his arms. He wouldn't dare say anything to someone who outranked him though.

"Oh all sorts these days. Did you know I caught Bullstrode and Greengrass with their tongues down each other's throats a few nights ago? Those girls are in your house aren't they?" he said turning to Severus and knowing full well this was the case.

"Yes, you brought that to my attention," Severus responded curtly. He hadn't actually managed to summon up the hypocrisy to take any house points from the young women but he'd given them a talk about appropriate behaviour and discretion which was excruciating for all three of them.

Filtch's eyes had lit up and his leer was even more pronounced under his lamplight.

"Yes, it's not just boys and girls we've got to separate any more. They get up to all sorts these days. Nasty business," he repeated. "Well, I shan't keep you any longer professors. Unless you wish to assist me?"

"I'm afraid we can't tonight Argus," Remus said as he handed the cat, who was growling her disapproval, over to him. "Severus and I have some business we need to attend to ourselves."

Filtch narrowed his eyes at this but simply responded "Very well professors. Goodnight." before pressing on with his task. Severus looked at the smiling Remus as if daring him to say something. When he didn't he simply gave a frustrated sigh before turning to let him in. As soon as the door was closed Remus pounced.

Severus found himself thrown back against the door. Remus' open mouth was on his kissing him fiercely. He contemplated pushing the man away but, Severus reasoned, he'd already broken the first rule today so there seemed no reason not to carry on now. Remus was grinding his hips into him and Severus could already feel his arousal.

"Still wound up from earlier, are we?" Severus taunted, eyebrows raised and eyes narrowed. A smirk playing on his lips.

"I just love what an arrogant prick you can be sometimes," Remus growled back as he led him over to his sofa, narrowly avoiding the coffee table, before pulling them both down onto it with Severus on top.

"Never expected that to be your type..." He said, still smirking, as he leaned in to kiss Remus again. The man attempted to unfasten his robes but Severus held his hand fast.

"You're my type," Remus panted heavily as he pulled their hips together again instead. "You always have been."

Severus lost some of his composure then. He found he was unable to stop himself from grinding back against him. Even though they were both fully clothed it still felt incredible. Remus' hands were on his ass moving him rhythmically and murmuring words of encouragement. As there was limited skin available, Severus put the rest of his energy into kissing the man's face and running his lips and tongue against the stubble that had formed there over the day.

They should stop. But Severus was pretty sure they were both at the point of no return already. And did this even count as fornication anyway? He readjusted Remus so he cock was pressing against the man's ass now. This seemed to send him into frenzy.

"Oh God, I want you to fuck me so badly," he breathed as he writhed under him. Severus was glad he'd brought himself off earlier as he was pretty sure that would have made him come then and there otherwise. To hell with the rules. He began removing Remus' trousers, struggling slightly due to the angle. The man just looked at him with a gasp of surprise.

"Well, help me get these robes off then for Merlin's sake!" he snapped in frustration. Remus quickly obliged as Severus removed his own. He paused. He'd never done this before but he knew there was some prep involved. Just then Remus muttered the summoning charm and the jar of lubrication hidden in Severus' bedside drawer, that had seen more use this week than in the past year, flew into his hand.

"How did you know I had that?"

"Saw it in the memory you showed me earlier..." Remus responded distractedly as he busied himself opening it, Severus flushed as he remembered how he'd gone as far as to share that with him, "...which, by the way, was probably the most erotic experience of my life." He continued as he coated Severus' cock spending more time there than necessary. "Just how often have you done that while thinking about me?"

"Lately so often I think I might be going insane," Severus admitted while struggling to keep his voice even. If Remus kept this up much longer he wouldn't last long enough to fuck him.

"And here I thought you were losing interest in me," Remus smiled as he mercifully stopped.

"What?! No! It's just-"

"Yes, yes I know. 'Professional boundaries,'" Remus said rolling his eyes. "Now use your fingers first."

Severus obeyed. He was getting rather good at following instructions, he realised. He also realised he wasn't half as nervous as he thought he would be as he ran a slick finger over Remus' tight opening. Just that was making him writhe. The man moaned his pleasure as Severus gently inserted one digit, then two. He let them be still for a moment to allow Remus to adjust before he began to move them.

He'd done his research. With a slight up and inward motion, and plenty of lubrication, he worked Remus to create what he hoped was a slow build of pleasure. It seemed to be working judging by his groans of approval. When Remus began moving against his fingers Severus used his free hand to slowly pump the man's cock causing him to cry out while gripping the edge of the sofa.

"Fuck, how are you so good at this?" he panted before saying, "Wait! Wait. Stop, I'm-I need you to do it now."

Severus didn't need to be asked twice. He withdrew his hands before using them to adjust Remus by the thighs to better align himself. Both men let out a deep groan as Severus eased into him. He didn't move yet. He was slightly worried he might hurt Remus.

"Oh god, if you don't bloody move soon *I'm* the one whose going to go insane!"

Apparently he didn't need to worry about that as Remus let out another cry, which definitely wasn't one associated with pain, as he began to move inside him. It was slow and slight at first. Severus had been so focused on Remus that he hadn't been paying much attention to his own pleasure. It hit him with a wave of intensity as he felt the hot tightness of being inside him. Their eyes met as Severus moved at the same speed but deeper. The man looked divine spread out under him. His pupils were blown and his skin flushed against his scars as Remus began to thrust his hips in time with his own. Severus ran his hand over the contracted muscles of Remus' stomach in appreciation. The look and feel of his hard cock between them was driving him so wild that words were escaping his lips.

"Uhh, God, Remus you're incredible."

The hitch in Remus' breath reminded Severus he wasn't particularly vocal during sex. He usually was so inwardly focused on what he was feeling and studying Remus for his reactions to actually communicate verbally. Remus pulls them together to kiss fiercely before wrapping his legs tightly around his waist. The new angle causes Severus to push deeper into him resulting in further moans of pleasure from them both.

"Is-is this OK?" Severus asked as he continued to thrust. Remus appeared to be having difficulty responding in full sentences.

"Fuck...yes...perfect...God...please..." he panted out between delirious moans.

Severus propped himself up by one arm to allow himself access to Remus' cock with his other hand. Remus was moaning louder than ever now and thrusting his head back against the sofa's velvet. As they moved faster and harder Severus felt his orgasm building. He slowed to try and contain it but Remus was all encouragement.

"Fuck yes, Severus. Do it. Now."

He really was getting good at following instructions. He came inside Remus with a few final spasmodic thrusts. It hit him like nothing he'd felt before and phrases like "earth-shattering" and "mind blowing" were starting to make sense to him. Soon after Remus was coming into his hand, jerking wildly.

And thus rule number 2 was broken 8 days, 17 hours and 12 minutes later. Severus always did set unrealistic goals for himself.

It was several days later and Severus was standing in front of the gargoyle that allowed access to Headmaster Dumbledore's office after having just received a summoning. He had not paused out of fear. No, he had already transcended from a state of extreme stress to one of passive acceptance of his fate. Instead he was frantically assessing his current financial situation and wondering how long he could remain unemployed until he found someone willing to take on a disgraced teacher, former deatheater and current homosexual. He and Albus were friends but even he couldn't be so forgiving as to look past this. Severus was just about to say the password when the gargoyle moved by itself to reveal Albus at the top of the staircase.

"What are you standing there for Severus? Please come up!" his tone seemed friendly for now but the wizard had been known to lull people into a false sense of security before.

Severus ascended the stairs to find the butterflies had returned. Not flapping their wings inside him but positively trying to gnaw their way out from the inside. He took some time to survey the familiar office for a final time. Fawkes was sleeping on his perch and the golden contraptions were whizzing away as usual. Severus looked up to see the faces of the previous Headmasters and Mistresses of Hogwarts staring down at him in judgement.

"Please take a seat my friend. And don't look so alarmed!" Albus gestured to the armchair in front of his desk that he had returned to sit behind. Severus sat. He didn't respond as he was unsure if he could his mouth was so dry. There were a few more torturous moments as Albus finished scrawling away at whatever document he was working on. His letter of dismissal probably. Finally he looked up.

"I've been meaning to speak with you for several days now, Severus. The other teachers tell me you've been acting more distant than usual and I've also found you to be...distracted and rather...twitchy."

"Albus, I assure you I'm perfectly fine."

"Severus. Gryffindor house has 287 house points presently."

"...and that's relevant because?"

"Because they had 287 four days ago. Which means you haven't removed any in that time."

"Ah."

"So I'm asking you to tell me what's troubling you," Albus was looking at him with concern but there was something else there also. Doubt? Mistrust? He must think that Severus was involved with something dangerous. That he was falling back into his old ways. He found himself becoming defensive.

"It's nothing! It's not what you think-I...OK fine." The man's penetrating look said he wasn't letting this go. "You'll get it out of me eventually. I...I've met someone."

"Really? My that is wonderful news!" Albus' face had melted into a look of pure joy. Severus simply eyed him back with a deadpan expression. "And do I already have the pleasure of knowing this fortunate woman?"

Severus hesitates. His heart is hammering in his chest and he feels the cold sensation of fight or flight at the back of his neck. But bizarrely he finds he needs to tell someone. If he doesn't his mind will implode. And who better than Albus to make sense of the situation?

"Not a woman. A man."

Severus can't meet his gaze. He doesn't know what he'll see on the man's face looking back at him. Discomfort? Shock? Outrage? Disgust? But when he finally looks up he sees none of these things. Albus' eyes were perhaps a little wider in mild surprise but they still gleamed with glee and his happy beam was even wider than before.

"Excellent! When can I meet him?"

"What?! Never!"

"I'm getting the sense that this is all very new to you, Severus," Albus said in a tone Severus found only slightly patronising.

"Obviously."

"Well, in my experience it can certainly come with it's own challenges. But they are all worth it when you find someone you love," he said whimsically.

"I never said anything about love!" Severus responded, his voice becoming shrill. "Wait, in *your* experience? Is everybody bloody bent around here?!"

Albus chuckles before reaching over to pat Severus on the shoulder. He gives him one of his knowing smiles. A smile that says he has a lot to learn.

"Don't worry Severus! You have my full support and as much discretion as you need. Feel free to confide in me anytime. All I ask is an invitation to the wedding!"

This man was completely unbelievable, Severus thought as he got up to leave. It was only after he'd gone several steps along the corridor after leaving his office that he realised his whole body felt lighter. He didn't even care that he'd just broken rule 3.

Chapter 4

Chapter Summary

Harry Potter knows Snape is up to something and, with the help of his friends and the invisibility cloak, he's going to prove it!

Chapter Notes

Short chapter from Harry's POV. No sexy stuff in this one sorry!

Just like the two before him, Harry's third year at Hogwarts had given him a lot of things to occupy his thoughts. This year he was being hunted by a mass murderer and plagued by dementors on top of the usual pressures of quidditch matches (where something was usually enchanted to kill him), essays and exams. Not to mention navigating the teenage hierarchy in a magical world that was still unfamiliar to him in so many ways.

But what, or rather who, had been really on his mind a lot the last few days was Severus Snape. He was worrying Harry. Even more so than usual for a 13-year-old boy to worry about his nastiest teacher. Specifically he was worried about that potion.

As he lay in the comfort of his four poster, listening to the rhythmic breathing and occasional snores of the other boys in the room, his mind kept going back to that smoking goblet on that silver tray. The way Snape kept looking at Professor Lupin all through dinner the evening he drank it. Harry couldn't fathom the expression on the potion's master's face but he was sure he could sense anticipation of something. It certainly was an incredible coincidence that Professor Lupin just happened to go off sick a few days later and Snape just happened to be there to step in to take over his class. Everybody knew the slimy bastard wanted the Defence Against the Dark Arts job and Harry certainly wouldn't put poisoning someone past him to get it.

No matter how many times Hermione chastised him or how much Professor Dumbledore trusted him for whatever reason, Harry knew the man was evil and he was going to prove it. He'd made up his mind. The next day at breakfast Harry found a quiet moment with Ron. His best friend was completely on board as he knew he would be.

"We'll be heroes Harry! We'll expose the greasy git and save Professor Lupin from a slow painful death – all before dinner!" Ron had whispered excitedly to him as he speared a third sausage on to his plate.

The plan seemed simple at first. They would hide out under the invisibility cloak in Snape's classroom to watch him brew the potion and look for signs of sabotage. They quickly ran into a snag though. Neither of them knew which potion Snape was meant to be making. He and Ron

researched all through the library for healing potions during lunch. Well, Harry had searched, Ron had mostly moaned about how it was “useless” after he didn’t find exactly what they wanted in the first book he picked up. He turned out to be right though as they could find no mention of a potion that produced the faint blue smoke that Harry had seen.

As far as Harry was concerned this only served to further suggest Snape’s guilt. But how would they be able to recognise if Snape sabotaged the potion if they didn’t know what was supposed to go in it in the first place? He could just ask Professor Lupin what the potion he took was but for some reason Harry sensed this would offend him. Even if it didn’t he would probably just be as evasive as last time. It was no use. They’d have to rope Hermione into this.

"Absolutely not!" was the girl’s obvious initial answer as they cornered her in a quiet section of the library. "You two are being ridiculous. We were all wrong about Professor Snape in first year and you’re wrong this time!" She whispered indignantly at them while adding to the steadily growing pile of textbooks in her arms.

"But you can’t deny it’s suspicious," Harry countered before he went over the facts again.

"Well, I admit there are a few...coincidences. But that doesn’t mean-

‘C’mon Hermione, you’re the smartest one of us. Bloody Hell, you’re probably the smartest in the whole school! If anyone can work out if he’s up to something it’s you,’ Ron said pleadingly, but also sounding surprisingly genuine. Harry could see Hermione swither. The way only flattery from Ron could make her. He continued to press her.

"He won’t even know we’re there! If nothing’s going on then no harm done. But if there’s even a slight chance that bastard-

"Ron!"

"-is hurting Professor Lupin then we have to risk it."

Hermione knew them both well enough now to know when they weren’t going to let something go. She was also too good a friend to let them do something reckless on their own. She sighed.

"OK fine. But for the record I still think this is ridiculous and I doubt even I will be able to know what’s supposed to go in such an advanced potion. Despite how highly you seem to think of me," she said, blushing slightly.

The second snag came when they realised they had no idea when Snape was going to make another batch. However with a bit of luck and a lot of snooping they got the information they needed. Harry, Ron and Hermione had just finished a herbology lesson and were exiting the greenhouses when Snape swooped past them wearing his usual black and the glare he reserved just for them. Obviously they hung around unseen.

"Good afternoon Severus!" Professor Sprout said brightly, "I assume you’re here to pick up the valerian roots? Don’t forget they are best used fresh!"

"Yes, thank-you Pomona. I do indeed plan on using them tonight," Snape drawled back sounding

slightly annoyed at being told something he evidently already knew. He took the basket filled with muddy roots she was offering before continuing. "These are one of the few ingredients I need that don't actually cost the earth."

"Yes it's unfortunate, but so worth it considering how much it helps Remus."

"Hmm," Snape responded sounding, in Harry's opinion, that even if it cost a few sickles it would not be worth it.

"Come don't be like that. We all know how hard you're working to help him!" Sprout said with a playfulness in her voice.

"I-uh..." Snape looked slightly discomposd. A flash of colour showed on his pale cheeks. "I must be going. Thank-you again." He said as he hurried away.

"Did you see how guilty he looked?!" Harry said mostly to Hermione once Snape was a safe distance from them.

"He certainly seemed rattled by something she said..." She agreed thoughtfully.

"It's happening tonight then!" Ron exclaimed with excitement as they made their way back to the castle.

The plan went off surprisingly simply. They had left dinner early and camped outside Snape's classroom to await his arrival. When he did come striding up the corridor and enter the room his arms were laden with ingredients causing him to leave the door open for a short time as he set them out on his desk. This allowed the three of them to slip through under the cloak just in time before Snape slammed it shut with a flick of his wand. As he busied himself carefully laying out each ingredient the three teenagers moved slowly round the desks to get the best view. Now all they had to do was be quiet and wait.

To Harry's amazement their luck continued. After Snape had returned from selecting one of his finest looking cauldrons he paused for a moment before flicking his wand again. All of a sudden some slow, yet rather loud, piano music started to play. Even Harry had to admit it was beautiful, in a melancholy sort of way, and therefore did not suit what he expected Severus Snape's taste in music to be at all. Not that he'd ever given it any thought.

"Clair De Lune," Hermione whispered to herself. The music was so loud they could talk in the lowest of tones without worrying about being heard.

"Claire de what?" Ron whispered back.

"Clair De Lune. Debussy. It means 'Light of the Moon' in French," Of course Hermione knew what it was.

Snape stood for a moment listening as he surveyed the work ahead of him. Harry wasn't sure what he was thinking as he hadn't seen many expressions on the man's face before other than contempt and loathing. But he thought Snape seemed a little sad, almost wistful. He soon snapped himself out of it and began brewing.

It certainly was a complex potion. Harry doubted he would ever have been able to attempt it, even

in his seventh year. Snape worked diligently on it and seemed extremely focused. Every ingredient was cut with precision and expertly added between complicated looking stirring motions. Harry recognised a few of the ingredients – powdered silver, moonseed and of course the valerian roots from earlier. But when Snape began to weigh out some purple flowers Hermione gasped.

"What?" He asked.

"That's aconite! It's extremely toxic if you use too much."

"I knew it!" Harry whispered back triumphantly.

"Wait! It's still an ingredient used in potions. We need to watch and see if-"

Snape was taking extra care in this step. He was weighing out the petals on his ornate scales one by one. Pausing every so often to check everything seemed right. When he was finally satisfied he began to crush them carefully in a mortar and pestle. The slow musical piece was coming to the last few delicate notes as Snape added them to the cauldron. The familiar blue smoke began to rise.

Harry turned to Hermione questioningly. She shook her head and smiled with relief before mouthing 'not enough'. Snape was setting the cauldron aside now before placing one of those silver goblets next to it. He turned quickly from it before sitting back behind his desk. Great, how long was he going to be here? Would they miss curfew?

All they could do was keep quiet and watch as Snape pulled out a stack of essays and began marking. Harry recognised them as belonging to their class. Judging by how often Snape paused to pinch the bridge of his large nose before letting loose some very strong curse words he didn't think they had done very well on this one. Just then all four of them turned to look at the door to see Professor Lupin enter after giving a brief quiet knock.

"You know, it's generally considered polite to wait until someone grants you entry before you waltz in," Snape said looking back down at his essays. There was something different in Snape's manner towards Lupin now they were alone, or so he thought anyway. His tone was still sarcastic but it was much softer than usual.

"My apologies Severus, I'll certainly remember that in future. I do appreciate you correcting my crass ways," Lupin said smiling with mock formality.

"How are you feeling?" Snape asked still not looking up.

"Oh you know...awful..but I can't complain when I have you around to help me," his smile seemed genuine now.

"Indeed you can't," Snape said finally meeting his eye. He pointed over to the cauldron at the side of the room. "I'm rather busy tonight so we'll need to keep this strictly *business* I'm afraid."

What on earth did he mean by that?

"Very well," Lupin sighed as he made his way over to the potion and poured some into the goblet. Harry still had a sense of alarm at the thought of him drinking it. But Hermione seemed to think it was OK. "Urgh, haven't you figured out a way to make this taste better yet?" Lupin asked after he'd drank.

"You know I spend my time thinking of nothing other than your comfort Remus" -since when did Snape call him Remus?!- "but as I've told you, exactly fourteen times now, there isn't anything I can do."

Lupin sighed again as he walked over in front of Snape's desk. "Well I suppose there are limits to even your talents..."

The three of them looked at each other under the cloak. Were they FLIRTING?! Impossible. Professor Lupin must be mocking him. But there seemed no trace of malice between them.

"There are limits to my patience also. What are you still doing here?"

"I have something for you."

Professor Lupin was still smiling and he appeared to be trying to suppress some excitement. He pulled out something small from inside his robes before tapping it with his wand to bring it back to its actual size. What landed on Snape's desk was a wicker basket containing a pile of small black and yellow flowers with silver edges.

"Flowers? That's a bit cliché even for you," Snape said looking down at them with his eyes narrowed. "Wait. Are these?"

"Silver-laced primroses! I remember you saying you needed some but that they were rather hard to find. I came across them on one of my walks in the forest," said Lupin, obviously pleased with himself.

"I said that weeks ago!"

"I happen to have an excellent memory."

"Disturbingly so. And I suppose you also remember me telling you that they grow deep in the forest? So deep Hagrid doesn't even go that far?"

"Don't seem to recall...OK fine. It took me about five hours."

Snape huffed angrily.

"You could have been hurt! And you aren't well right now! You look even more bedraggled than usual come to mention it. Sit down for goodness sake," Snape had conjured an armchair for Lupin who gratefully sank back into it.

"I can take care of myself thank-you. Though I did trip over a particularly large tree root. Didn't want to crush the flowers so I fell quite hard."

"You're an imbecile." Snape was rooting around in the drawer of his desk. He produced a large bar of high quality chocolate and handed it over to Lupin.

"Ah! This should help." Lupin said eyeing it happily. After he'd taken an appreciative bite he went on absent-mindedly. "Oh this is good. Did I ever tell you I love you?"

All five people in the room went completely still. Snape was staring at Lupin across his desk in apparent shock. Both men began to flush as they looked away from each other awkwardly. Lupin coughed.

"Ahem-um- what I meant of course was-"

"Don't worry Remus. I always know exactly what you mean." Snape said softly as he returned to his marking. Lupin paused for a moment to look at Snape before he smiled and stood up.

"I know you do. See you later Severus."

Snape didn't reply as Lupin left the classroom. Once the door was closed he abandoned his marking, placed his head in his hands and stared down at the desk eyes widened. After several moments he buried his face in his hands. What he said into them was muffled but Harry thought he could make out the words -

I love you too.

Chapter 5

Chapter Summary

Severus gets a surprise from Remus.

Chapter Notes

My wife really wanted me to do the events of the last chapter from Severus' perspective. And y'know, happy wife happy life and all that! ;D

WARNINGS: Domestic abuse mention, Discrimination mention

Severus had the uneasy feeling he was being watched as he placed the cauldron on his desk. Normally he would have gone with his gut and started investigating his classroom for signs of intrusion. However, lately he had become used to living with an overarching paranoia so he just tried to ignore it. He paused before continuing trying to think what would help. Perhaps some music? That usually helped him focus. Nothing with lyrics – too distracting. He flicked his wand at the gramophone carefully hidden in the back of the room and set it to play whatever record was still in it. Debussy. How appropriate, he thought as he surveyed the work ahead of him.

As Severus listened to the haunting music his thoughts of course turned to Remus. It was sad, really, how much time they had wasted. Maybe if things had been different all those years ago they could have been friends? Maybe things would have developed into something more? Maybe Severus wouldn't have gone down the path that he had. Maybe if he'd learned to trust someone other than Lily she would still be...

No. The odds were stacked too highly against them. Severus shook himself out of it. All he had was now. And right now, he could do something to help. He set to work. Soon he was fully focused on the task at hand. He had to be of course – slipping up could cost Remus his life – but he also wanted to make sure it was completely perfect. That there was enough dittany to minimise the risk of Remus acquiring any new scars, and a little extra valerian root to ensure his mind was as peaceful as it could be. After he was finished Severus set the potion aside, placed the goblet next to it, and sat down to await Remus' arrival. The man was the one coming to him...as was so often the case these days.

It had been several weeks since he and Remus had begun their – whatever this was – and Severus had learned a lot about him in that short space of time. Remus' tale was, unsurprisingly, a sad one. Severus had, of course, known about his lycanthropy for years but he'd never really taken the time to appreciate how it dominated every facet of his life. Remus told him small snippets during their time together. Severus learned to simply listen as questions tended to make him evasive. He spoke about how his parents had had to move around constantly for fear he would be discovered. How the only time he'd ever felt accepted was at Hogwarts. How he would give in to any peer pressure to ensure that acceptance continued. How he could tell his friends he was a werewolf but he was

too scared to tell them he was gay in case they rejected him.

And Severus found himself telling him things too. About his life. About his father. Once he just sat staring straight ahead and all the feelings and memories he'd bottled up for years came spilling out of him. He spoke about the violence, recounting some things he never told anyone before. About how powerless and ashamed he felt the times he did nothing to protect his mother. About the times when he did do something and it just made everything worse. He even confessed to all the times he thought about killing his father. About how, when he got older, he knew he could. So so easily. It would only have taken a flick of his wrist. But he'd wanted to be around for his mother. He couldn't go to Azkaban. She needed him. And then she'd died.

Remus just let him talk. And then, when he was sure Severus was ready, he held him. He'd let himself cry for the first time in years in the man's arms. Amazingly it had felt perfectly natural. When he was finished Remus had wiped his remaining tears away and Severus was further surprised to see some in the other man's eyes too. They'd stayed in each others arms without speaking until they eventually slipped into sleep.

Pushing the memories aside, Severus busied himself with the essays that needed marking. He really was starting to get behind. And if the rubbish he was forced to read was any indication, his teaching was being affected too. He had to be firm with Remus this time. Tell him he was too busy for any- Severus looked up to see the man had entered the room after only the briefest of knocks.

"You know, it's generally considered polite to wait until someone grants you entry before you waltz in," he reprimanded with the playful sarcasm he seemed to use when Remus was around.

"My apologies Severus, I'll certainly remember that in future. I do appreciate you correcting my crass ways," Remus quipped back. They both knew full well that particular boundary was crossed some time ago.

"How are you feeling?" Severus knew if he didn't ask now their usual back and forth would escalate before he got the chance.

"Oh you know...awful...but I can't complain when I have you around to help me." Severus could tell he didn't wish to discuss it. He'd lived with this condition practically his entire life. Just because it was new to Severus didn't mean Remus wanted to spend his time lamenting to him how hard his life was. He wouldn't want Severus to worry, plus he was far too stoic for that.

But he did worry. Even though he knew it was ridiculous to. He'd never cared before, why should he now just because they were screwing? However, last month when Remus had disappeared off to the shrieking shack – *This is something I have to go through alone. Trust me, it's better that way* – Severus had had time to reflect that this wasn't strictly true. He'd never really know why he hadn't told anyone Remus was a werewolf all those years ago. Of course there was his 'oath' to Dumbledore, and the small sense of power he'd gotten over holding the knowledge over his bullies, but there was something else that had stopped him even telling Lily. Sympathy? Empathy for a fellow outcast? Though Severus had known deep down he could have changed to try and fit in if he'd wanted to. Remus wouldn't have that luxury if everyone knew what he was.

After that night, the night Remus' *friends* had nearly turned him into a murderer, the boy had sought Severus out several times to apologise. Remus had become more and more desperate to gain his forgiveness but each time Severus denied him it. He only stopped when Severus took out his wand and threatened to curse him into oblivion if he ever came near him again. He knew it wasn't Remus' doing. What he couldn't forgive him for was how he still went running back to the others despite what they'd done to him. He'd thought the only difference between him and the other marauders was that Remus had the misfortune to possess some kind of conscience. Severus had no

interest in alleviating his guilt.

But that was then. Now Severus could look back with the perspective of an adult he understood why Remus had sought refuge in his friends and why he'd feared abandonment and isolation so much. Wasn't that the exact reason he himself had gravitated more and more towards the dark arts and those who practised them? They were more alike than he'd ever realised.

"Indeed you can't...I'm rather busy tonight so we'll need to keep this strictly *business* I'm afraid." Instead of pressing him, Severus allowed their shameless flirting to continue.

Remus had feigned disappointment but Severus could see he wasn't up to it anyway. As the man turned away to take the potion, Severus' mind went back to their first unrestrained encounter against this very desk. He wished he'd chosen a different location to unconsciously come on to him – it made teaching from it now immensely distracting at times. He was brought out of the memory by Remus commencing his moaning about the taste of the potion causing Severus to respond with his usual retort.

"Well I suppose there are limits to even your talents..." The man never missed the opportunity for innuendo it seemed. He knew just what talents Remus was referring to as he gazed down at him with a mischievous smirk. Severus was a quick learner and he'd gotten to know just what made Remus tick during their time together. It didn't hurt that the man had given him permission to enter his mind from time to time so he could see exactly what he wanted. See it and withhold it until he was a writhing, begging mess. The picture of desperation. Only then would he finally give it to him.

"There are limits to my patience also. What are you still doing here?" He was starting to get mildly irritated now. Mostly with himself at being unable to ever truly be firm with Remus.

"I have something for you." Severus stopped to observe him properly. He'd become slightly more animated and his eyes were gleaming with anticipation. What on earth could he be introducing him to this time? Severus was then surprised to find a basket piled high with small black and yellow flowers had appeared on his desk. Did Remus really think he was the type to be wooed by such things?

"Flowers? That's a bit cliché even for you," Severus tried to ignore the feelings of delight he felt as he looked at them more closely. It was only when he noticed the delicate silver edges that he realised what they were. "Wait. Are these?"

Remus went on to make up the ridiculous story that he'd 'just happened' to come across them. Severus knew every inch of the safe locations in the forbidden forest and the useful plants that grew there. Silver-laced primroses were not one of them. And he'd mentioned he needed them weeks ago! Did Remus really pay attention to every mundane thing he said?

"I happen to have an excellent memory," the man responded with a coy smile after Severus pointed this out.

"Disturbingly so. And I suppose you also remember me telling you that they grow deep in the forest? So deep Hagrid doesn't even go that far?" Even despite his affinity for creatures that would kill him without hesitation, the half-giant knew it was too risky to venture that far. Had Remus really put himself in danger just for this?

"Don't seem to recall..." he trailed off as Severus gave him one of his dangerous looks that said he should proceed with caution. "OK fine. It took me about five hours."

Severus' was hit with a sudden fear that quickly turned to anger. What was Remus doing putting

himself at risk for something so frivolous?! He realised that the man did indeed look a lot worse than normal at this stage in the lunar cycle. He looked exhausted and his robes were in a particularly battered state. He must have rushed straight here on his return from the forest. Severus began scolding Remus for being so irresponsible before conjuring one of the armchairs from his quarters for him to sit down in.

"I can take care of myself thank-you. Though I did trip over a particularly large tree root. Didn't want to crush the flowers so I fell quite hard."

"You're an imbecile," he remarked in frustration. Severus was rummaging through his desk drawer to locate the stash of chocolate he kept on hand for Remus. The man seemed to think it was a cure-all for everything. He watched with enjoyment as the man bit into it and chewed with an expression of pure bliss.

"Oh this is good. Did I ever tell you I love you?"

Severus froze. He was being flippant of course. But still, hearing those words had caused his heart to leap. They stared at each other. Remus looked just as stunned by what he'd said. As they looked into each other's eyes the feelings pushed through to him. There it was. Love. Somehow Severus knew it had been there the whole time.

"Ahem-um- what I meant of course was-" Remus stammered in his nervousness. He wasn't going to watch the man suffer. No more game playing.

"Don't worry Remus. I always know exactly what you mean." Severus can't look at him. Somehow he manages to keep his hand steady as he pretends to return to his marking. He can feel Remus watching him, perhaps hoping he'll say more. But then he stands and Severus hears the smile in his voice as he speaks before taking his leave.

"I know you do. See you later Severus."

Severus manages to keep it together until the door is closed before he panics. Remus loved him! He truly did! No one had ever...why was he feeling so overwhelmed with...oh. The realisation comes to him slowly. He feels like he has to say the words aloud to make it real to him. He speaks into the hands he has now buried his face into.

"I love you too."

He can't leave things like this, he realises as he leaps from his chair the legs scraping nosily along the stone floor. Severus abandons his work and flies from the room. He paused briefly as the door swings back as if it had collided against something after he pushed it shut behind him. Whatever. He's got no time for this now. He strides off in the direction of Remus' quarters.

The three of them watch Snape go under the cloak. Ron is muttering curse words under his breath and clutching his foot which got hit by the door as they rushed out to avoid being locked in the classroom and ending up with detention for the rest of the year. They remain still for several minutes until they are certain the potions master has left. Hermione then whips off the cloak and turns to stand in front of Harry and Ron before erupting into a fit of giggles. The boys just stare at her as she doubles over in apparent hysterics.

"Well, I'm glad *you* find it so funny," Harry said angrily.

"It's not them I find funny," Hermione managed to say through continued giggling. "They're adorable! It's your faces that are utterly comic!"

Harry looks at Ron who is wearing an expression of confused horror. He imagines his own face looks similar. Harry doesn't really care that Professor Lupin is gay but he's in love with Snape?! Seriously?! Hermione continues to mock them as they make their way back to the Gryffindor common room.

"*Oh Hermione, we need your help! Snape is evil and he's hurting Professor Lupin!*" Her face is bright red with suppressed laughter.

"Seriously Hermione will you give it a rest?" Harry responds irritably. He needs some time to process this shift in his world view.

"Well Harry, he'll be doing something to him right now but I don't think it'll be painful!" Hermione chortled clearly enjoying herself. Since when was she so vulgar anyway?

"You don't think they're?!" Ron exclaims, eyes wide with shock. Hermione just continues to giggle as she skips ahead of them.

Chapter 6

Chapter Summary

Severus pays Remus an important visit.

Remus Lupin couldn't stand it when someone didn't like him. Even if he outright hated someone he worked hard to make a good impression and usually won them over in the end. It was an unfortunate trait for a werewolf to possess he knew. He was never going to be accepted unless he hid a major part of himself from the world. That was why he had loved his friends James, Sirius and Peter so much. They had accepted him. They had even tried to be like him! Being back in Hogwarts had rekindled some of that sense of joy, even though it was tinged with sadness at the fate that had befallen the three of them. He had truly felt at home here. It was the most free he'd felt in his life being fully himself with them.

Well...not fully himself. He never told them he was gay. Remus had always known he'd liked boys. As far as he was concerned this was just another reason for his friends and everyone else to hate him. His mother and father had unintentionally instilled an intense fear of rejection in Remus with all the hiding and moving around. He'd known his friends had a hateful side and was terrified of losing them. So he'd never stopped their bullying. Remus had preferred to see that hate be channelled into others rather than ever experiencing it for himself. Of course it was Snape, the boy who never hid any part of himself from the world, who received the majority of it.

That was the very reason he had admired him. He would never have admitted it to his friends but Remus thought it was...well...*brave*...the way Snape didn't seem to care if he was liked by others or not. He'd seemed happy as long as he had his best friend Lily and the admiration of a few Slytherins. Snape wasn't bothered that they hated him. He just couldn't stand the humiliation they put him through on an almost daily basis. Remus often thought back to that first day on the Hogwarts express. When Snape had said exactly what he was thinking to James and Sirius and wouldn't back down even when it made him their target for years to come. Not like him. Remus always tried to keep his friends more outrageous behaviour under control, but when it came down to it, he always submitted.

Maybe that was why he had thought about Snape so often during those hormone fuelled nights when he'd gotten older. It started out innocently enough. Remus would imagine Snape accepting one of his many apologies after the shrieking shack incident and they would become friends. They would become close and eventually the other boy would share that dry sense of humour just with him. He wasn't quite sure when the fantasy turned into them kissing but after that it quickly moved to touching. Every time he thought about him he allowed things to go further until they were sucking each other off in supply cupboards.

He was delighted when he'd returned to Hogwarts as Defence Against the Dark Arts teacher to find Severus Snape still hadn't changed. He wasn't so delighted to find that Severus still seemed to loathe him just as much as when they were teenagers, if not more. Remus tried his usual tactics to charm him with kindness, patience and his own form of wit but to no avail. Everything he did just seemed to make Severus more and more quietly enraged. Admittedly the boggart fiasco was a bad

move but Remus was becoming frustrated and angry himself.

His main frustration was that the old feelings of attraction were still there. Not just still there but stronger than ever. Without the guilt of what his friends would think of him Remus was able to explore these feelings unrestrained. Why did he want Snape so much? True he had grown from the lanky boy he used to be into a man who carried himself with an air of focused determination. The features they'd teased him over in their youth now lent him an unconventional attractiveness. Not to mention that voice...and the way he would look at him so intensely sometimes...and oh no he was exactly Remus' type.

Severus wasn't exactly a nice person, obviously, but Remus could sense something deeper under all the bitterness. His fantasies returned but this time Remus was winning him over with his humour. Maybe he could help Severus be happier if they were friends. And then they were kissing—Merlin, why was he acting like a teenager with a crush again?

It wasn't going to happen anyway. Even if Snape didn't hate him he was straight. He'd been in love with Lily hadn't he? Another reason James had never let up on him. And the whole reason he was on their side now. Dumbledore hadn't told him in so many words but he knew that must be the reason he trusted him, the romantic that he was. What Dumbledore *had* told him though was that Snape was a talented legilimens, so talented he could even fool Voldemort, and he'd used this to help win the war for them. Remus was filled with an even greater admiration for Severus when he'd learned this. Even though it was slightly worrying that the man he regularly fantasied about fucking was capable of reading his mind at any given moment. It would be fine though. As long as he avoided eye contact he wouldn't find out.

But then...that day happened. That day where Severus had dragged him into his classroom and propositioned him after he was already so turned on from those black eyes watching him so intently. Then he'd told him he was the first man he'd ever been with. Not that Remus would ever have known. But it was so exciting to be able to introduce him to certain things. Remus would have been happy with just the physical stuff. Not many people got to live out their teenage fantasies after all. But they'd grown closer so quickly. Remus found Severus to be as humorous as he'd always suspected him to be but was also pleasantly surprised to find he could also laugh at himself from time to time. They would talk for hours like actual lovers and even told each other things about their lives. Sad things mostly, neither of them had lead particularly happy ones. But these days Remus was feeling positively euphoric!

Perhaps it was that euphoria that drove him to enter the forest that day even though he was starting the run up to transformation. Severus had said he needed the flowers for a potion he wanted to brew around the full moon, but none of his regular suppliers had any at the moment, and it was too dangerous to enter the forest just for that. Remus was quite sure he could handle it though and apart from a particularly aggressive tree root he came out mostly unscathed (though he had left out the part where he had to charm a herd of centaurs into lowering their arrows from his throat when Severus angrily reprimanded him). Then in his haze of exhaustion and chocolate fuelled bliss he'd told Severus Snape that he loved him.

It was true of course. But it wasn't exactly the way he'd planned on telling him. Remus ran his hand over his face as he sat down in the comfortable brown chair in his quarters. Maybe it wasn't so bad; Severus hadn't seemed too unsettled to learn Remus' true feelings. He wished he'd said something more though. Severus was getting better at expressing his emotions but maybe this was too much too soon. Apparently that was a theme in their relationship thanks to him. Remus was then roused from his musings by a sudden rapping at his door.

When he opened it Severus pushed past him into the room showing no sign of his usual restrained

composure. He didn't even pause to see if anyone else was around.

"Now who's being impolite?" Remus asked with an amused smile.

He stopped smiling when he saw how flustered Severus looked standing there. Maybe he was more unsettled than Remus first thought. His hair was dishevelled as if he had been repeatedly running his fingers through it and he was biting the skin at the tip of his thumb the way, Remus remembered, he used to do before facing a particularly difficult exam. As he looked at him Remus realised that Severus had never been in his quarters before and he was slightly embarrassed by how sparse and impersonal it was there.

"I-I came to...I need to tell you I...urgh, Merlin why is this so bloody difficult?!" Severus keeps his eyes anywhere but Remus' face as he tries to get his words out.

Remus is silent. He doesn't know what Severus is going to say. He knows what he *hopes* he's trying to say but things could still go either way at this point. The man then moves in close to him with an air of determination. He puts both hands on Remus' shoulders as if to steady himself. Severus finally looks him in the eye as he speaks.

"What I'm trying to say is...I'm in love with you too."

Severus gives a short mirthless laugh then, as if the words sounded ridiculous coming from his mouth, or it was ridiculous who he was saying them to, or both. Remus knows he means them though. Severus never said or did anything he didn't want to simply to please someone else.

Remus doesn't reply. He just moves in to kiss him gently. It feels different this time. It feels like home.

Severus woke to find himself in an unfamiliar bed for the first time in years. Remus' naked limbs were tangled up in his own, his sleeping face resting softly against his chest. The events of the night before came back to him.

After he'd finally gotten the words out he'd felt like an idiot. But then Remus had given him the most perfect kiss and they'd slowly moved into his bedroom. They'd undressed each other but they hadn't gone any further. Not for a lack of trying on Remus' part but Severus had stopped him as he was clearly exhausted. So they'd just held each other close under his white sheets and soon the werewolf had drifted into a peaceful sleep.

Severus had remained awake for a while longer thinking. He wondered what his teenage self would say to him if he could see them now. What would Lily think? She would be happy he supposed. Severus then had to suppress some laughter at the thought of what the rest of the marauders would have said. He must have made some noise as Remus stirred and pulled him closer. This brought Severus back into the moment and he soon fell into sleep beside him.

He wasn't sure what time it was but sunlight was streaming through the high window. At this time of year that meant it was at least nine. Severus sat up with alarm before he remembered it was the weekend. This caused Remus to rouse and look at him sleepily.

"Relax. We do get days off remember? At least I do."

The teasing had begun already it seemed. Severus lay back down and allowed his heart rate to return to normal.

"It might be a bit suspicious that we both miss breakfast..." he said, still worried.

"I'm sick remember? And I'm sure they'll survive without your company for one morning."

Remus had moved in to wrap his arms around him again before kissing his neck. The feel of the stubble on his unshaven face was enough to distract Severus from his anxieties.

"I suppose I can stay a little longer..." He said as Remus began tracing his hand in slow circles over Severus' chest.

Their touching was slow and lazy at first. Hands running over stomachs, arms, backs. Becoming tangled up in hair. Lips grazing each other before moving closer together. It wasn't long before things became more impassioned. The kissing became deeper and more desperate. Hands strayed further downwards.

Remus turns Severus over onto his side and cradles round him from behind. Severus can't touch him easily in this position but Remus has access to every part of him and he takes full advantage of this. He snakes his hand around him he moves between touching his chest, stomach, thighs and cock, as if he can't decide where he wants to spend the most time, while sending further shivers through Severus' body by tonguing the back of his neck and shoulders.

The urge to touch Remus is strong but he's turning Severus over again now so that he's fully on his stomach. He indulges the man as he seems in the mood to take control this morning and, although he didn't really like to admit it, Severus loved it when he did. Being able to trust someone enough to fully let go was oddly freeing. Remus begins to move his mouth from the top of his neck steadily downwards. He begins to feel slightly alarmed when Remus continues on past the small of his back down to the top of his ass. He must have tensed because Remus is stroking the backs of his thighs and telling him to relax, that he'll stop if he wants...but he doesn't want that.

"No...don't stop," Severus breathes out into the bed as he covers the back of his head with his arms in anxious anticipation. Remus slides his hands slowly higher up Severus' thighs until he's lightly caressing his ass. He feels the heat rise in his face as Remus spreads him slightly before running a thumb over his opening. Severus is surprised to find that this simple touch is enough to send a burning pleasure through him causing him to moan into the pillow. He can't see Remus but he can somehow feel the smirk coming from him. Just then Remus' thumb is replaced by the wetness of his tongue.

The wrongness of Remus' mouth being there was exhilarating enough in itself. The feeling is strange but somehow completely enticing. Remus flicks his tongue against him sending ripples of pleasure into him. Severus can't seem to stay still. He's grasping handfuls of his own hair with both hands and groaning. He finds himself grinding into the mattress in desperate need of some friction. Remus is moaning into his asshole now, the vibration sending Severus into more fits of writhing. From the sounds Remus is making and the motion of his hand Severus can tell that he's touching himself. The movements of his tongue become less controlled and more frenzied as he gives in to his own desire.

Just as Severus begins to think he can't take much more of this Remus stops. With a final brush of his mouth over him Remus moves his hands back up to coax him over onto his back. He's glad to be able to see Remus' face again. It's flushed with pleasure as he moves his focus to Severus' cock. He wraps a hand around it and begins to stroke his length while circling the head with that incredible tongue. Their eyes meet and Remus gives him a seductive half smile. A smile that says

Severus has no idea what's about to hit him.

There are several more moments of the intoxicating pleasure of Remus' mouth fully around him before his hand is sliding down to his ass again. He rests two fingers against his entrance before moving them slowly. Severus inhales sharply as he tenses again. This was completely new and terrifying and absurdly thrilling and - Oh God - Severus wanted it so much right then. Remus runs his free hand reassuringly over his hip while making eye contact and Severus realises he's seeking permission. The sight of Remus looking up at him with his mouth around his cock would make him agree to anything of course.

"Uhh, yes. Do it."

Without pausing the slow rhythm his mouth had found, Remus withdraws his fingers and when they return they are slick with something. Severus is briefly impressed by his preparedness before those fingers slowly enter and stretch him one at a time.

"Nnn...uhh...fuck," Severus' usual eloquence eludes him as Remus begins to move his fingers inside him. With a skill only brought about by experience he soon finds a spot where the feeling is particularly sensitive. It's a strange feeling of pressure that slowly starts to build into a warm pleasure that only serves to intensify the one Remus' mouth is already producing. Severus has time to briefly reflect on how he'd managed to reach thirty-three without having discovered this until his mind is no longer capable of forming such detailed thoughts.

As Remus' mouth moves faster Severus can feel himself getting close. He starts grinding down on his lover's fingers and moaning his name. Remus withdraws his mouth from his cock but leaves his lips brushing tantalisingly against it as he watches him with an expression of enjoyment. The fingers are still pulsing. It's not enough to make him come but it's enough to keep him right at the edge as wave after wave of pleasure hits him. He knows in reality it's been minutes but it feels like he's been like this for hours before Remus begins to trace that tongue back along his cock again. This brings forth a fit of desperate, shameless begging from Severus' lips.

"Oh yes Remus, please please please, I can't-please..."

Remus seems to enjoy being the one to withhold gratification this time if his wicked smile is anything to go by. He can't quite seem to bring himself to be as cruel as Severus usually is though as he takes him into his mouth again before grasping the base of him tightly in his left hand. Severus can only thrash and cry out loudly, certain at one point that the strength of what he's feeling is going to be too much for him. Then he's having an intense full body orgasm that seems to go on forever. When it's finally over tears are stinging his eyes. He's not sure if he's ever felt this vulnerable. Not even when he told the man he loved him last night.

Remus clambers on top of him and brushes the hair out of his face before kissing it repeatedly and asking if Severus is OK. He can't quite form words yet so he simply nods his reassurance and kisses him. As their lips meet Remus begins to thrust against him as if he can't contain himself. He moans into Severus' mouth as he slips between his thighs and continues to move. It still astounds Severus that he can exact such fierce arousal from Remus with very little effort on his part. Severus can see his face tighten with pleasure before he buries it into Severus' chest and starts to breathe harder. He moves his hands round to Remus' hips encouraging him to move faster. He's soon groaning out his name and Severus feels the heat of him coming against his ass.

Remus pressed his forehead against Severus' and for some reason the two men begin to laugh softly. They stay in bed for the rest of the morning. Laughing, talking, touching, until Severus insists on tearing himself away. The expectation of seeing each other later is unspoken between them.

It's the night of the full moon. Remus will be alone and tormented in that forsaken shack and all Severus can do is sit there in his quarters. He feels an angry frustration at his uselessness – unfairly forgetting that he is one of the few people who can brew the one thing that helps and had done so free of charge even before the feelings between them developed.

He really should have asked Albus for a bonus come to think of it, but he'd never really felt in the position to demand anything from him. Not even the job he wanted so much. He was passionate about potion making but he knew the Dark Arts. He'd lived them, almost been consumed by them only to come out the other end and back into the light. Severus knew he could use that knowledge to truly prepare the students for what was out there. Maybe even prevent a few young Slytherins from succumbing themselves. Perhaps he was less jaded than he'd lead Remus to believe on that first evening together.

Though Severus had to admit the man was doing a good job. He'd been relieved to see the students were more competent than they'd been in years, thanks to Remus, when he's stepped in to cover his class. Not that his pride would let that show to any of them. They'd agreed he would be the one to cover werewolves. Remus wasn't sure he could face teaching the children about a 'dark creature' that he himself was, at least not this year anyway. Not to mention the derogatory language still used in some of the textbooks was simply appalling! Severus is just starting to compose an angry owl in his head to the department of education when he's interrupted by the arrival of someone at his quarters.

His stomach leaps at the thought it might be Remus but of course the rational part of his brain knows that isn't possible. He should have recognised the unassuming knock of Albus Dumbledore, his only other semi-regular visitor.

"Good evening Severus. I was in the mood for a nightcap when I felt the urge for your company! Mind if I join you?" Albus was smiling warmly and holding up a bottle of Ogden's Old firewhisky.

"Certainly Headmaster, always a pleasure," Severus tries to keep the awkwardness he's feeling out of his voice. He usually enjoyed Albus' visits but this was the first time they would speak privately since Severus – what? – came out to him? He'd really done that. Merlin. Albus entered the room and sat down in the chair next to his unlit fireplace with a sigh.

"Do you mind if I-?" Albus points his wand at it causing a burst of merry, crackling flames to appear before he has time to answer. Severus conjures two tumblers and sets the bottle to pouring them a measure each, adding the splash of water he knows Albus prefers but leaving his own straight. Severus reminds himself not to overdo it and loosen his tongue any more than he already has.

They discuss safe topics for a while; Ministry bureaucracies and current affairs in the wizarding world. They had just finished discussing Olivander's latest wandlore research on the connectivity of wands with twin cores when Severus senses that Albus can hold the real reason he was here no longer.

"I must confess Severus, what I'm most interested in is how your romancing is going..." the old wizard asks him casually.

"Very well. Thank-you," Severus responds stiffly. Albus continues to look at him expectantly but Severus simply gives him a challenging stare back.

"Is that really all you're going to say on the matter?" he asks, allowing his disappointment to show freely.

"Yes."

"I had hoped you would feel able to speak with me about it."

"You hoped you could nose into my business you mean," Severus says, not unkindly as the bottle pours out more whiskey for each of them.

"Well, that and live vicariously through you. Let me tell you, when I was your age-

"Stop. Please. I really don't need those mental images."

Albus chuckles and they sit in companionable silence for a while.

"But honestly Severus, you seem much less – how can I put this?- *uptight* than you have been in years. I believe the students have also noticed a change in you. Even Longbottom seems to be quaking less after he leaves your class." Severus freezes. Was his happiness really that obvious to everyone? He was going to have to reign it in. "Anyway, all I'm trying to say is that I'm happy for you," he finishes, raising his glass and finishing his drink. After Severus follows suit Albus stands up to leave.

"Thank-you for the visit, Albus. I truly do always appreciate your company," Severus says as he walks him to his door.

"As I do yours, my boy!" the Headmaster says brightly. "And I thought you might be particularly lonely tonight what with Remus being away. Goodnight!"

The man exits his quarters without stopping to take in the look of abject horror on Severus' face.

Chapter 7

Chapter Summary

Remus takes Severus on their first date.

OK so Dumbledore had figured it out. Did Severus really think that he wouldn't? It's not like he ever left the castle for extended periods in order to meet up with some dark, handsome stranger. He hadn't taken that into account, and he used to be so cunning he could fool even The Dark Lord. Love really did do strange things to people.

It would be alright though. Albus understood. He must have gone through the same thing in a time where the wizarding world was far less accepting. It still...wasn't great...but as attitudes in muggle society changed at a rapid rate, theirs followed. It wouldn't do for wizards to appear behind in terms of social progress. Though there were still remnants of the attitude that homosexuality was a 'muggle disease'.

Perhaps it would even be better this way. Now he knew the headmaster didn't disapprove of their relationship, Severus wouldn't need to act so cold towards Remus in front of the other teachers any more. That was becoming more and more difficult particularly after the other morning. He kept catching Remus grinning to himself like an idiot at the staff table when he thought Severus wasn't looking.

He had to tell Remus. He wasn't sure how he'd react, especially with this being entirely Severus' own fault. Severus decided to get it out the way as soon as he'd returned from the shack and visited him in his quarters that night. Remus had been alarmed at first but quickly relaxed once Severus reassured him they had the headmaster's blessing. He actually seemed to find it rather amusing.

"Well of course he would know it was me! You don't have to be a genius like Dumbledore to put two and two together. I'm the only new person in your life right now!" Remus said, laughing at him.

"Yes, yes I was very foolish but there's no need to rub it in," Severus grumbled, embarrassment flaring. "You have to remember this is all new to me!"

"Having an illicit affair?"

"I meant being in love."

Remus looked at him, apparently carefully considering his next words. He looked down at the table between them before saying:

"Not even Lily?"

Hearing Remus say her name didn't hurt as much as he'd expected it to.

"That was different. It's wasn't like this. I thought it was at the time but I was wrong." Severus knew that now. Remus sat with that information for a time before looking back at him with a smile

and taking his hand.

“We should go somewhere.”

“I’m sorry?”

“Somewhere away from the castle! Get away from all the people that know us and the... memories.”

“Are you asking me out on a date?”

“What? No! Well...I guess technically you could call it that.”

“Why do I get the feeling we’re doing things in reverse?”

“I guess neither of us turned into the most functional adults.”

So that was how Severus now found himself being dragged by the hand around each room of London’s National Gallery. Remus had planned the day fully but hadn’t told Severus much about it, just that they would be in muggle society so as to be less likely to run into someone they knew and therefore could, ironically, be themselves. Turned out Remus was an avid art lover. Not so much wizard portraits, which he described as ‘dull and hideously self-aggrandising’, Remus admired the way muggles could bring something to life on a canvas without magic. How people could trigger such a range of emotions using a few raw materials.

Severus wasn’t really sure he got it but he enjoyed listening to Remus talk so passionately about something and the way he seemed so enthusiastic about sharing it with him. The man got so carried away he had to be shushed by the guards on several occasions. After a couple of hours they left, Severus’ brain only feeling slightly overloaded by the various lessons.

“Sorry, I went on a bit.”

“No, it was wonderful. Thank-you.”

“I do love it there. Though I wish they’d had something from Monet’s blue period...”

“I’m guessing those would be more gardens but blue this time?”

Remus sighed.

“I don’t think you realise quite how ground-breaking French impressionism was.” He said, but managed to stop himself before he launched into another lecture. Severus watched as the man sat himself down on the wall of one of the fountains next to a very inaccurate depiction of a merman made of bronze. His gaze rested on one of the enormous lion sculptures.

“Ah, the Griffindor in his element.”

Remus chuckled at that.

“You have to admire how hard muggles work on these things like these.”

“It’s human nature to create. Sometimes I feel having magic takes some of the wonder out of it. It’s why I’ve always liked brewing potions, it feels more rewarding without so much wand-waving.”

“Never thought I’d hear that from you.”

“I told you I possessed hidden depths.”

“Indeed! You certainly revealed them to me the day you told me that.”

Severus falters. He’s always meant to come clean with Remus about what his true intentions were that day in his classroom but he’d been scared of how he’d react. It felt like the right time now though. Severus didn’t want their relationship to be based on lies or misconceptions. He’d grown tired of deceit.

So he sits down beside Remus, crowds of tourists wandering past them, and he tells him how it really was. How he’d convinced himself that he and Aurora were an item. How he’d been mad with jealousy but hadn’t understood why. How he didn’t realise he was attracted to him until they were wrapped around each other.

Remus is stunned at first. Then he starts to look upset and slightly distressed until Severus reassures him that the only thing he regrets is not being honest with him sooner, that it was the best thing that ever happened to him, and finally how being with him these past few months had changed everything.

And then, to Severus’ relief, Remus lets out that laugh he’s grown so familiar with lately.

“No wonder you were so flustered afterwards!”

“I don’t get flustered.”

“Please, you were like a smitten teenager.”

Severus is about to protest further when Remus leans in and kisses him. Instead he just clasps Remus’ hand in his and entwines their fingers together. It was only when they’d broken apart that Severus remembered they were in public. Not many people seemed to have noticed them but most of the ones that had were giving them discreet smiles of approval. Severus found he didn’t care about the ones that weren’t. He doesn’t let go of Remus’ hand.

“So what’s next?”

“Thought we could walk around Soho for a bit.”

“That is not happening.”

“Perhaps next time...”

The rest of the day passed far too quickly. Severus gained a new appreciation for muggle architecture from seeing it through Remus’ eyes which were full of wonder having not grown up with it. Though Severus doubted Remus would be as impressed if he took him back to Cokeworth.

Being openly a couple was surprisingly easy. Severus had never cared much about the opinions of muggles and he wasn't about to start now. He wondered what it would be like to be like this in the wizarding world but found he couldn't quite imagine it.

“Professors?!”

They'd just stepped out of a used book shop in Bloomsbury and Remus was teasing Severus about the nice edition of *The Catcher in the Rye* he'd managed to pick up. Severus' looked up astounded at the voice which belonged to Rubeus Hagrid. Not only was he shocked that he was in front of them but also by the fact that he'd been so absorbed in Remus he hadn't even noticed the enormous, hairy man among the crowd of people.

“Thought it were you two!” he boomed at them as he approached, causing several muggles to jump out of the way in alarm. “Saw you headin' in that shop. Figured I was mistaken though cos it looked like ye were holdin...anyway what's brought yer here?”

The two men had instinctively moved away from each other. Severus couldn't speak. Thankfully Remus took over.

“Afternoon Hagrid! Severus and I were just here visiting Bloomsbury at his suggestion,” Remus looks at him pointedly.

“I...er...”

“You see I've been doing a side research project on Kelpies and Severus suggested I incorporate a muggle perspective. There's a specific book on Scottish mythology I've been trying to get my hands on and we thought this would be the best place to come,” Remus continued confidently as Severus floundered.

“I see! Any luck?”

“Not yet unfortunately. Though Severus managed to find some teenage fiction he wanted.”

“It's not teenage fiction! It's a modern classic!” Severus said indignantly as he found his voice.

Hagrid let out a thundering laugh causing a smartly dressed woman to start before turning to look at the three of them.

“Well, nice teh see ye both gettin' along so well! Been ter visit the zoology museum meself. Amazin' what these muggles seem to think are extinct!” He looked around at the crowd fondly before saying. “Should we travel back teh the castle t'gether?”

Severus felt his stomach drop. He supposed the day had to end sometime though.

“Actually Hagrid we're not going back to the castle tonight.”

“Oh?”

“There's a conference on the properties of gillyweed that Severus is dragging me to and I imagine it'll go on quite late. You're welcome to join us if you like!”

“Sounds like it'll go righ' over my head by thank ye anyway!” Hagrid said politely before bidding them farewell with a wave for Remus and a hard slap on the shoulder for Severus. Once the half-giant was out of earshot he turned to Remus.

“Are you sure you weren't put in Gryffindor by mistake? You showed a fair amount of cunning there,” Severus said, rubbing his bruised shoulder. “What did you mean about not going back to the castle?”

“I booked us a hotel...” Remus said with a sideways glance at him.

“Are you serious?”

“What’s the matter? Are you not the type to put out on a first date?”

“Hilarious,” Severus responded with a raised eyebrow. “I know *he's* oblivious but don’t you think other people will wonder why we’re both away for a night?”

“I doubt anybody’s first guess will be correct. Anyway, would it really be so bad if it was?” Remus was trying and failing to make his voice sound casual.

Maybe it was the result of the day they’d spent together but Severus was starting to seriously consider whether it would be or not. Severus knew the prospect was just as frightening for Remus as it was for him but, if they really wanted to make this work, they couldn’t hide forever.

“I expect dinner first,” was all Severus said in reply.

After dinner at a modest restaurant – during which Remus had rare steak as he was still left with cravings after the full moon – they checked into their hotel. An awkward exchange occurred during which Remus had to clarify to the receptionist that yes he had in fact intended to book a double room. Severus gave the woman his best glare as she handed the keys over sheepishly but Remus simply thanked her with his politest of smiles.

The room was small and minimally decorated but somehow this made it tasteful, intentionally or otherwise. Severus was hit with a worry about how much of Remus’ monthly salary had gone into today but he thought better of saying anything. He’d already tried to pay for dinner but Remus wasn’t having any of it. Said it would be his turn next time.

Remus moved in behind him, encircled his arms round his waist and rested his head against shoulder.

“Sorry it’s not much,” he said apologetically. But Severus can’t imagine anything more perfect than this. He doesn’t tell him that though. Severus is getting better at understanding his own feelings but expressing them is another thing altogether. So he simply leans in to Remus and allows him to graze his lips over his neck. After his hands slide up to the buttons of his shirt Severus moves away and removes his wand, carefully concealed in the inside pocket of his suit jacket, and begins muttering a silencing charm. Before he can finish Remus grabs his wand arm to stop him.

“The rest of the couples here won’t have that luxury. You’ll just have to keep the noise down for once.”

“Whatever does it for you,” He leans in to kiss Remus before saying, “I’m going for a shower first.” Remus sighs but he lets him go.

Severus had forgotten how terrible electric showers were. He spent about five minutes trying to get the temperature somewhere between scalding and ice cold. He'd considered enchanting it but had learned from experience that magic and muggle technology didn't always mix. He had also forgotten how much muggle shampoo stung the eyes. After another minute spent cursing and trying to blink the pain away he opened his eyes to find Remus standing naked in front of him.

“Haven't you ever heard of privacy Lupin?” Severus said when he'd regained his composure after the shock. “We really need to work on your perception of boundaries.”

“I need clear communication on that front,” Remus replied with a grin as he moved in closer to him. Severus relents and lets himself be kissed under the water, enjoying the way their bodies feel pressed together under the stream.

“Well you can make yourself useful while you're here,” he says, handing Remus the complimentary miniature bottle of shower gel that definitely did not smell like the ocean as advertised. The man eagerly obliged. He soaped up Severus' body, predictably spending more time in certain areas than others, until he's used up the meagre bottle. Severus laughs as Remus presses his body in closer in order to share some of the lather.

That laughter is short lived as Remus presses his mouth against his under the water before pushing him against the cold tiles and biting his bottom lip lightly. He keeps nipping Severus' skin between his teeth and he trails down over his neck and chest, pausing to take a nipple between his teeth making Severus gasp before getting down on the floor. He works Severus' hard cock a few times before taking it into his mouth.

Remus always looked amazing on his knees in front of him but the light glistening off the water running down his back made him simply divine. But...those tiles couldn't be good for Remus' knees and Severus was starting to feel cold now he wasn't under the water. Plus he'd had other ideas for how this evening would go.

“Perhaps we should move back to the bedroom...” he suggests, looking down at him. Remus reluctantly takes his mouth away from him.

“Perhaps? I said *clear* communication,” he says teasingly, still working the base with his hand.

“OK. I would like to move to the bedroom now because I'm bloody freezing.”

Remus laughs and stands up with a groan of effort.

“Probably for the best. I'm not as young as I used to be.”

They'd moved on to the small double bed. Too eager for each other to bother drying themselves fully. Severus had so far been successful in stifling his moans mostly using Remus' mouth to do so.

“What do you want?” Remus breathed into his ear. He lay sidelong next to him and had progressed to firmly working Severus cock with one hand but was going no further.

“I...ah...”

“I can’t read *your* mind, remember?”

“You realise you sound like a simpleton when you call it that?” Severus informed him through sharp intakes of breath.

“Well, I can just get you off like this but if you want something else you’ll have to tell me...”

“Fine,” Severus said with frustration. “I want you to do what you did before.”

“Remind me what that was?” He teased.

“Please don’t make me say it.” Severus covered his steadily reddening face with his hand. Remus smirks but gives up the cruelty. He takes his hand away mid rhythm causing Severus to groan briefly. That groan turns into a gasp as Remus moves down to enter him with his fingers.

“I take it you’re a fan of this?” Remus asks as he watches Severus grip the bed sheets between both fists, the muscles of his torso clenching. He just moves against Remus’ fingers in response. “But surely you want something more? I mean, you probably could get there with this alone but it might take a while...”

“I want you to fuck me this time,” Severus blurted out, a little too loudly, as the pleasure overtook him. Remus’ smug confidence vanished as he let out a low groan followed by a curse.

“You sure?” he asked, already clambering fully on top of him.

“Are you going to make me beg for it?”

“Now there’s an idea...”

Remus moved in for a deep kiss before beginning to move his body against his. That almost-but-not-quite-enough friction always sent Severus crazy. He began to moan louder before remembering their situation and he bit down against Remus’ shoulder in an effort to quieten himself. This backfired however as it caused the other man to moan in equal volume.

‘Shit. Maybe we should use a charm. Don’t want us to get thrown out...’ Remus said after Severus shushed him.

‘Giving up your little game as soon as it gets difficult?’ he challenged.

Remus grins down at him in response before moving off the bed to his discarded pile of clothes. Severus expects him to pull out his wand and start performing the spell but instead what emerges is a jar of lubricant. He really needs to stop being surprised by Remus’ forward thinking.

Remus prepares him with the assuredness of someone who knows what they’re doing. He pushes his now slick fingers into him again, stretching and teasing him until Severus is writhing beneath him. Then he’s on top of him, slathering his own impossibly hard cock while whispering into his ear how long he’s wanted to do this, how good it’s going to feel to be inside him, causing Severus to melt against him.

Despite the length of time Remus spends getting him ready, Severus can’t suppress a sharp intake of breath as he begins to enter him.

“Are you OK?” Remus asks, all consideration despite his own arousal. Severus loves this about him but also finds it extremely irritating on occasion.

“Yes of course I am!” he snaps.

“Really? Because you seem a little tense...” The man is far too intuitive.

“I just need a minute to adjust.”

Remus considers things for a minute.

“Maybe you should be on top,” he says, withdrawing and lying down beside him again.

“What?!”

“You'll be in control that way. Might make things easier.”

Remus is already pulling Severus on top of him. His self-consciousness is amplified by how exposed he feels sitting astride Remus. But part of him enjoyed it when Remus pushed him out of his comfort zone, which was good because it seemed to be happening a lot lately. So, with a slow exhale, he lets the man guide him back on to his cock.

Severus leans forward to frame Remus' face with his raven black hair as he kisses him. Then he begins to move back against him. It is easier this way. He can take Remus into him at this own pace without worrying about it being too much for him. Remus opens his mouth as Severus moves back so he's fully inside him. As he does, Severus inserts his tongue and enjoys the feel of Remus moaning into him.

He'd always imagined himself as a passive recipient when he thought about this. It felt good to be the one making Remus squirm beneath him. Severus runs his slender hands over Remus' chest as he sits up. He begins to slowly grind on top of him and takes in the sight of Remus coming undone below him.

“Oh God, Severus you feel fucking unbelievable,” he can't help but smile when he hears that and rewards him by moving faster. “And you look amazing.”

Severus is about to tell Remus to stop being ridiculous but pleasure is suddenly overwhelming him. Whether Remus has judged that he's ready or whether he's just lost control, Severus isn't sure, but regardless he's started thrusting up into him. He's hitting Severus in just the right spot. Again, he's not sure if this is intentional or not as Remus doesn't seem to be in full possession of his mental faculties.

What Severus does know is that he can't take it any longer. He moves his hand to his own cock in desperation. This results in a guttural moan of approval from Remus. Even though his eyes are closed he can feel the man watching him lustfully. He feels a hot rise of embarrassment but it only serves heighten his arousal.

“Yes...Remus...Fuck...I can't...”

He's lost all control now. There's just the incredible sensation of Remus thrusting into him and the promise of orgasm steadily building. Severus opens his eyes and sees through the hair covering his face that Remus is still transfixed by his hand which is now moving uncontrollably by itself.

Just as Severus is right on the edge, Remus joins him in pumping his cock before taking over completely. The pleasure is blinding. Severus hears a voice, (that doesn't sound like his but it must be), calling out Remus' name following by a deep loud moan as he begins to spurt out onto the man's navel. It seems to go on forever. He's still going when he feels the heat of Remus coming inside him with a long loud 'Fuuccck'.

Severus collapses on top of him and Remus clings to him tightly. All of a sudden some muffled laughter sounds from out in the corridor and they look at each other. They'd completely forgotten about being quiet.

Chapter 8

Chapter Summary

Sometimes it's better when things are out in the open.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

The fumes had risen so quickly after he'd added the scurvy grass that Harry hadn't had time to back away from his cauldron before breathing in a lungful of bright turquoise smoke. This resulted in an embarrassingly loud coughing fit that he was unable to suppress. Tears were blurring his vision by the time he'd got himself under control but he still heard Malfoy's nasty chortle coming from across the table. At his expense no doubt.

"Careful Potter, we really don't need you becoming more confused than you are already. Weasley will have to start dressing you next." As soon as he could see again, Harry was treated to the familiar sight of the cruel smirk on the boy's haughty, pale face.

"Shut up, Malfoy," Harry croaked lamely. It was hard to think of a comeback when the bitter taste of the fumes was still overwhelming his senses.

"I'm just thinking of your reputation Potter," Malfoy continued, sarcastically holding up his hands in mock innocence. "Merlin knows he's never had the means to fully develop his own fashion sense, let alone be in charge of anyone else's." He nodded his head towards the particularly shabby looking set of robes Ron had on today, causing him to flush beneath his freckles and laughter to break out among the nearby Slytherins.

Harry was just about to let loose a retort about how hard it must have been for Malfoy to learn to dress *himself* after losing his family's house elf last year when Snape appeared behind them.

"Can we settle down over here please?" he said in a low, dangerous voice. The students resumed their work at Snape's arrival, but a few Slytherins still felt confident enough to make obscene gestures at Harry and Ron behind his back. To Harry's further annoyance Snape hung around to examine his potion and wasted no time in criticising it. "Potter, your confusing concoction is nowhere near thick enough at this stage. Don't you remember me clearly saying to only grind the *stems* of the scurvy grass? The petals need to be added one by one separately...but thank-you for demonstrating to the rest of the class what will happen otherwise so they can avoid similar stupidity in future."

Harry knew that had he made the same mistake this time last year Snape would have been far more vicious and would probably have docked at least ten points from Gryffindor. Though he still made an exception for Harry, the potions master had certainly become less impatient and far less cruel during their lessons in recent months. The school was awash with rumour as to what could have sparked the change in him. Only Dean had gotten close to the truth when he jokingly suggested one night in the common room that maybe Snape had 'finally gotten laid' which was met roars of laughter from the other Gryffindors.

Hermione had just smirked to herself while he and Ron exchanged pained looks. She had, of

course, sworn the boys to secrecy and threatened to never help them with an essay again if they told anyone. That was fine with Harry as he had no desire to make the information public. He still hadn't quite accepted it and neither had Ron.

"I've got it! The greasy git slipped him a love potion," the boy had said triumphantly to them after the rest of the students had gone to bed.

"Seriously, Ron?" Hermione responded in exasperation. Both he and Harry had been trying to come up with an explanation for what they had witnessed between their most loved and most hated teacher for some time now.

"Well, it would make sense Hermione..." Harry said tentatively, not wishing to anger her further. It made more sense than Professor Lupin seeing anything in Snape in his opinion anyway.

"Urgh, love potions don't work like that!" She had snapped. "Someone under a love potion is completely overtaken with passion and they don't care who knows it because they aren't thinking clearly! Professor Lupin wouldn't have been so restrained. Not to mention shy and awkward and..." She'd then trailed off into a happy squeal that made Ron roll his eyes.

As he watched Snape sweep away from their table with a disparaging 'tsk' Harry was suddenly furious about the whole situation. The words were out of his mouth before he could stop himself.

"Sir, wouldn't silver laced primroses work better in this potion than scurvy grass?"

Snape had stopped in his tracks. He hadn't turned round to face him yet but Harry could see his whole body tense.

"Are they just not used because they are *difficult to find*?" Harry continued stressing the words, unsure where his boldness was coming from. Hermione was glaring at him from the other table but he could hear Ron quietly sniggering beside him. When Snape finally turned towards him his face was impassive as usual.

"No Potter. It's because they have an unfortunate tendency to cause people to say things recklessly. Things they would otherwise...regret." Harry swallowed dryly. He knew he'd gone too far. Snape stared directly into his eyes for a few moments too long. When he finally looked away Harry saw a brief flash of fear in the man's own black ones.

The rest of the lesson proceeded as it normally would. Harry somehow managed to make a vaguely acceptable confusing concoction, bottled it and left it on Snape's desk without making eye contact. Before he could finish cleaning up his work space and get out of there Snape stopped him.

"Potter, perhaps you could stay behind after class and we could discuss your question some more?" Snape was smiling an odd smile at him from behind his desk but his eyes were completely cold. Ron and Hermione flashed him worried looks which grew even more concerned after Snape said "Perhaps Granger and Weasley would have something to contribute to the conversation as well..."

The rest of the class filed out. A few of the Slytherins, Malfoy included, shot them bewildered looks as they left. As soon as they were alone Snape locked the door without rising from where he sat and performed a silencing charm. Probably so no one would be able to hear the screams of torture they were about to make...

“How many people have you told?” Severus saw no need to keep up any pretence now. He’d seen it all in Harry’s mind. Seen how they had entered his classroom and spied on them that day (why hadn’t he listened to his instincts?!). Not that he’d really needed to look into the boy’s mind as he seemed desperate to rub the knowledge in his face. All Severus could do now was damage control. He remains seated so they can’t see him shaking. He’s unsure if it’s from anger, fear or humiliation.

“No one sir, we swear!” Granger was saying. She sounded as unsteady as he was feeling.

“Do you honestly expect me to believe-” Severus stopped. He’d searched each of their faces in turn and saw no signs of deceit. He was certainly capable of detecting this in people far more capable of duplicity than any of these three.

Did he honestly think he was going to be able to keep this secret? No he didn’t, not really, but did it have to be Potter and his gang that found out first? Severus lets out a short laugh at his own expense then. This seemed to strike more fear into the children than any other reaction he could have given.

“Why?” He asked coldly. None of them responded. He merely stared them out, tapping a finger on his desk.

“Because w-we...we respect your privacy sir. As well as Professor Lupin’s,” Granger continued to stammer.

“Is. That. So?” He stood up to tower over them. “And where was the respect for our privacy when you were huddled under your cloak spying on us?!” His voice had risen along with his anger. It would overtake him if he wasn’t careful. Severus expects the three of them to remain dumbstruck but Potter speaks.

“It was my idea sir. I thought you were doing something to the potion you make for Professor Lupin. You seemed to hate him so much...” His voice sounds oddly calm considering his situation. That familiar arrogance, along with the injustice of being assumed guilty of some hideous crime, *yet again*, sends Severus into a rage.

“OF COURSE IT WAS YOU, POTTER!” The three of them jump simultaneously. Severus felt his lip curl involuntarily as he snarled at them. He forced himself to try and regain some control, but it was getting harder and harder to close off his emotions these days. “You have no regard for common decency let alone rules! I suppose you’re going to use this to – what – blackmail me?”

“No sir, I-”

“Then what was that little performance in aid of just now?” Severus spat. The boy seemed to be wrestling with what he wanted to say. Finally he looked up into Severus’ face and spoke.

‘I...was angry. I shouldn’t have-but I’m just sick of the way you treat me all the time!’ Severus feels his eyes widen in surprise as Potter continues his tirade. ‘It isn’t fair! I’ve never done anything to you! Just because you didn’t get on with my dad doesn’t mean-’

He only stops when Weasley puts a hand on his shoulder and whispers ‘Mate, leave it’ under his breath.

Severus is quiet for some time. Potter is right of course. Ever since he arrived looking so much like his father the well-used part of Severus’ brain that detected threat went into overdrive. He’d reacted instinctively and attacked first as usual. Part of him knew the hatred he felt towards a child was

irrational but he just couldn't seem to help himself. Not to mention the torture of him having Lily's eyes was almost too much to bear sometimes.

But the feelings weren't as strong as they used to be. He still disliked the boy (he hadn't had a complete personality change!) but the rage he felt whenever he saw him had lessened. Severus wasn't sure whether this was due to Remus' calming influence or the amount of soul-searching he had been doing lately.

Did it really matter so much if everyone knew anyway? Teachers had openly been in relationships before. There would be a few complaints of course but he was fairly certain the rest of the faculty would stand by them, for Remus' sake if not for his.

Harry's was trembling. He couldn't believe he'd actually said all those things to Snape! Once he'd started he found he couldn't stop until Ron had thankfully snapped him out of it. Snape was definitely going to make things even worse for him now, either that or finally follow through with his threat of getting them all expelled.

But, to Harry's immense surprise, Snape didn't seem so angry any more. In fact he actually seemed to be seriously thinking about what he'd just said. It felt like an agonising amount of time had passed before he addressed them again.

"I can't control what you do," Snape was speaking to the three of them but his eyes remained mostly on Harry. "People will find out eventually anyway. Thank-you for your discretion up to now, I can't honestly say I would have done the same had our situations been reversed."

Snape waved the charms away as he sat back down behind his desk and the door opened. The three of them still watched him warily while he busied himself with some papers. After several moments Snape looked up at them in exasperation.

"You may go," he said, rolling his eyes and indicating the way out with his hand. They didn't need to be told twice. The three of them collected their books and scurried out as quickly as possible.

"OK. That did not go how I expected it to," Ron was saying once they were safely out of the dungeons. "Blimey Harry I think you might actually have gotten through to him!"

Harry was too stunned to respond. The idea of Snape actually changing his behaviour towards him was difficult to imagine but this didn't stop him from hoping it could be possible. Hermione seemed to be in a state of deep contemplation.

"You know...it seemed like he actually *wants* us to tell people..." she said slowly.

"Why in the name of Merlin's left tit would he want us to do that?!" Ron asked apparently flabbergasted. Harry couldn't understand it either but he would have used less crude language, in front of Hermione anyway, who was now scowling.

"Because, you nitwit, it would probably be easier for them if things were out in the open!"

Harry wasn't sure if that was true or not but he could see her point.

Remus' heart is thudding in his ears as he arrives at Severus' office. What he's just heard has sent adrenaline coursing through him causing him to move so fast he collides with a startled looking first year Slytherin, who was just about to exit, as he bursts into the room. He awkwardly apologises as he helps the red faced boy gather the pieces of parchment that were his essay from the floor. For some reason the Slytherin appears more apologetic as he hurriedly leaves, closing the door behind him.

“Care to tell me what's so urgent you almost knock one of my students unconscious?” Severus is looking at him through narrowed eyes, his expression says he's unimpressed. He's standing in front of him with his arms folded. All of a sudden Remus has the urge to study one of the many jars of repulsive substances lined up behind Severus' desk.

Remus knows he has to tell Severus but he's scared. Scared of how he's going to react. Scared of losing him. Scared of rejection as usual.

But he's also scared of that look he's giving him. The one that says he'd like nothing better than to create a new curse just for him. So he spits it out.

“I...I've just finished a class with my third years. As they were packing up I heard a couple of Griffindors – Thomas and Finnigan I think – talking about...talking about us.”

“Talking about us how?” Severus asks, though he sounds like he already knows.

“They just...spoke about us being together and expressed surprise.”

“What did they say exactly?” Severus was doing his whole 'unreadable' thing now. Remus feels his anxiety peak.

“Well, um. They were talking about how much they like me as a teacher-”

“Well *naturally*.” The sarcasm is oozing from Severus more than whatever is oozing in the jar behind his head.

“And that...uh...how they couldn't believe I would 'go out' with someone like you.” Remus is wincing by the end of the sentence.

“Someone like me?”

“I think the phrase 'nasty piece of work' was used.”

“Charming.”

There is silence for several moments as Remus tries to work out what to say to fix this. Nothing is coming. Then, to his shock, he sees that Severus is trying to suppress a smile.

“Will you relax?” he continues, “I've also heard similar things from my students.”

“You have?”

“I think the phrase 'shabby, spineless sycophant' was used once.”

He just stares at Severus blankly for a time.

“I have found the Slytherins to be more well spoken,” Remus responds after he's processed the information. “You don't seem nearly as disturbed by this as I thought you'd be.”

“Really?” Severus is slowly moving towards him, a wicked smile on his face, much like that day in his classroom. The day that started all this. “I'm a fallen deatheater with a less than conventionally attractive appearance and a rather unpleasant demeanour-” Remus starts to protest but Severus keeps talking over him, becoming ever closer. “-Do you really think I'm not used to gossip? It's you I'm more worried about.” He stops when their faces are inches apart.

“Me?” Remus asks astounded. “I'm a werewolf who has barely held down a job in his life and has enough scars to frighten small children. I'm not exactly a stranger to talk either.”

Severus' cool mouth is on his. Those surprisingly soft hands are cupping his face. Though Severus had the same intensely intimidating presence as all those months ago, the kiss they share is worlds apart from that first one. It's firm but slow and a thousand unspoken feelings are poured into it.

“Things are probably going to get difficult for a while,” Remus says when it finally ends. He knows this from experience. Severus keeps his forehead pressed against his as he says:

‘It'll be worth it.’

Chapter End Notes

Thanks for reading my story. I had a lot of fun writing it, though it got a little stressful in parts! If you liked it let me know! I plan to do another Snupin in the future.

Please [drop by the archive and comment](#) to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!