

don't hide that part of yourself away from me, or our friends, or the boys, or—" he paused, biting his lip, "or our kids. The general public don't matter."

Severus' breath hitched. "I... I doubt myself, sometimes. My... capabilities." His ability to express positive emotion. He still had a habit of resorting to cutting words when he got upset, even with people he loved. Especially with people he loved.

"Then it's a good thing you've got me here to have confidence in you," Remus pointed out, cupping Severus' jaw. "I'm sure it's awful having all these people crossing your boundaries and assuming things about your personality. But it'll pass. You just keep being your usual grouchy self, and they'll soon realise that you're exactly the same as you always were, except you're a bit less biased towards Slytherins and a lot less biased against Harry Potter." He grinned teasingly. "And all that changes with us is that I can finally laugh openly at your snarky little remarks instead of keeping a straight face. Honestly, anyone who thinks you don't have a sense of humour is just too thick to realise it."

Severus raised an eyebrow, hand resting on Remus' thigh. "I didn't realise you found me so... amusing."

Remus looked back at him with the same mischief Severus remembered from when they were teenagers. "Distractingly so, sometimes," he confessed. "All these Order meetings, and the staff meetings back when I worked here. Pretty sure Filius thought I had bronchitis, I was constantly coughing to hide my laughter." That gaze changed, sparking with heat that curled right around Severus' insides. "That, and the fact that I am unendingly and overwhelmingly turned on by the sight of you absolutely ripping someone to shreds with that razor-sharp tongue of yours," he drawled, a hint of a growl creeping in. "It's quite a problem, really."

Severus' eyes widened. But really, he shouldn't have been so surprised. Remus Lupin appeared to have been crafted by the universe specifically for Severus in every other way, why not also have him be aroused by what usually made Severus so hated?

Merlin, to think — he actually got to spend the rest of his life beside this man.

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Harry should have suspected, really, that Susan had tricked him. With her *'you do the hard part, Harry, and I'll take care of the rest'*, placating him and encouraging him to just take care of her little Dark Lord problem, promising he could rest when that was done, and then dragging him into *this*.

There was so much to do, now they were part of the Wizengamot. The actual rebuilding of the Ministry was not their problem — certainly wasn't *Harry's* problem, anyway, though he knew Susan was helping her aunt out. And sometimes Kingsley came to Harry for a quick chat about his opinion on things. But that wasn't really working on it! The man asked the same things of Sirius and Narcissa and Remus, even Snape!

But outside of that, there were just *so many laws*. He'd known this, logically. He'd spent more time than he cared to count over the last three and a half years reading through books full of those laws, finding all the ridiculous ones that were still somehow in place. Susan had