

Instead of apparating back to the castle, Severus made for home, shrinking his mask as he strode across the lawn. Unsurprisingly, Remus was waiting in the kitchen. “How was it?” his partner asked, jumping to greet Severus. He hesitated, scant inches away. “May I...?”

Severus closed the distance between them, ducking his head down to press his nose to Remus’ temple. “Fenrir Greyback is dead,” he declared, quiet but strong. Remus tensed in his arms.

“What?”

“The Dark Lord decided he had no use for a werewolf who could not bring him an army,” Severus relayed, meeting Remus’ honey gaze. “The packs have sided with Potter. Greyback’s punishment for failure was death.”

A hitch of breath, a flash of eyes. “Oh.”

“He blamed you for his failure,” Severus warned, hating the panic that welled in him when he thought of the idea of the Dark Lord having a *personal grudge* against his wolf, against another person Severus loved. “Greyback told him you were the one who swayed the packs to Harry’s side.”

Remus nodded slowly. “He’ll be after me, then.” No fear. Gods, this man was a marvel.

“In due time, so he said. I believe he has other priorities, first.” Like Dumbledore, and Potter. The loss of the werewolves was a blow, especially with how thin on the ground the Dark Lord’s ranks were looking these days, but it was not the biggest blow his master had suffered lately. Not since losing two Lestranges and watching the third have to retrain himself to duel with his off hand.

Remus nuzzled his jaw. “Let’s get you out of those robes. In the bath. Get the scent of that monster off you.” Severus wasn’t sure if he referred to Voldemort or Greyback, but he had no protests either way.

There were no more words between them until they were both naked, Severus in the bath and Remus kneeling at its side, washing his hair. Severus cracked an eye open, looking up at his partner. “You are taking the news that the Dark Lord wants your blood remarkably better than anticipated.”

Remus laughed, leaning down to kiss Severus, the angle awkward. “He wants the blood of anyone who stands against him. Anyone who stands with Harry. I am hardly in more danger than I was before.” He smiled, sitting back on his heels. “I spent half my childhood imagining Greyback’s death. Of course, most of those imaginings were at my hand, but the end result is the same.” His hand went to the back of Severus’ neck, squeezing gently, his smile turning soft. “It may be too late for me, but I have made a wonderful life for myself regardless of circumstances. But now, no more children will be turned on purpose for that beast’s amusement, or his vengeance. There will always be werewolves — but he was the worst of them, and now he’s gone, and the world is a better place for it.” Remus paused, cocking his head. “Does that make me a bad person, to relish in his death?”