

seemed happy enough. When he wasn't being attacked by dementors, at least.

Remus sighed, rolling over onto his side. The hollow spot in his chest ached, the faint howling in the back of his head mournful, and he squeezed his eyes shut as if that would make it go away.

"I don't know if this was a good idea after all," he murmured to himself, knowing he'd be having nightmares that night.

It was going to be a long year, full of old memories and broken pack bonds in so many ways. Remus just hoped it would be worth it.

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The start of term was certainly eventful.

Between everything with Buckbeak and Malfoy, and adjusting to his new classes, Harry hardly found any time by himself to work on his extra curricular studies. True to their word, the twins had borrowed Angelina's Flourish and Blotts catalogue, and Harry had sent off for a book about all the old pureblood families, as well as one about the duties of a pureblood heir. It was so much easier to find what he wanted when he had a nice handy list of them in the catalogue. He should've done this *ages* ago!

The night after his new books arrived, Harry left Ron playing chess with Ginny and scurried up to the dorm; if he was lucky, he'd have at least an hour before everyone started wanting to go to bed. He dug his new books from the side compartment in his new trunk, wondering which to read first.

The one about the duties of an heir was shorter, so he went with that. It was dry, as most of the books about pureblood stuff seemed to be; they certainly didn't want to make it easy for people to learn about it all!

"Harry?"

He jolted at the sudden noise, shoving his book under his pillow in a move that wasn't remotely subtle. Neville backed up a step, holding his hands out soothingly. "It's okay, I'm sorry, I thought you heard me come in."

"Sorry, Neville. You startled me."

"You're taking up your family seat?" Neville asked, and Harry blinked. Neville gestured at the book.

"What? How do you know about that stuff?"

Neville's answering smile was somewhat crooked. "Neville Longbottom, Heir to the Ancient and Most Noble House of Longbottom, at your service," he declared, bowing in the way Harry had read was formal when one heir addressed another. Harry gaped.

"You... *really*?"