

The three of them went silent, until Sirius let out a sigh. “How could I have spent so long sitting in Azkaban while Harry was out here left to Dumbledore’s manipulative little claws? I should’ve been there to protect him.”

“You can’t beat yourself up over it, Sirius, you had no idea. Believe me, I’ve been doing plenty of that since I found out.”

“At least the truth has been discovered before it’s too late,” Severus added. “Potter has plenty of time for his magical core to balance out before he inherits the rest of his family magics.”

“True. We’ll get him ready for the future, whatever it holds.” Sirius’ grey eyes gleamed with determination.

Remus thought back to what Harry had said before he’d left the castle, about Trelawney’s prophecy. He’d shared that with his two companions, of course, but he could hardly believe it; Peter was going to be the one to help Voldemort back to power. It would happen, no doubt sooner than any of them would like. “Will we have enough time?” he asked plaintively, knowing the two men were thinking along the same lines.

Beside him, Severus tensed. “Now that we have the boy safely, and I have been... enlightened about Dumbledore’s true regard for him, I fear there’s something I need to tell you both.” He looked up, meeting Remus’ gaze. “Remus, do you remember when I told you I had turned to the side of the Light?”

Remus could remember it all too well. They’d had a hugely explosive fight about six months after graduation, when Severus had taken the Dark Mark. Remus had begged him to reconsider, to go to Dumbledore for help, but Severus had stood firm in his decision. It was the first time Remus thought he’d truly lost the man for good. They didn’t speak again for almost a year, until one day Remus came home to find Severus on his doorstep, looking heartbroken and promising that he’d changed, that he’d agreed to turn spy for Dumbledore and rejoin the light. It had taken time for them to trust each other again — indeed, they’d been just starting to properly figure it out when Lily and James had been killed, and Remus had practically dropped off the face of the earth in mourning.

“I never told you why,” Severus continued, his long fingers curling around Remus’ own. “What event caused me to realise the truth of the decision I had made.” He glanced over at Sirius, who was listening intently. “This is going to be... difficult for you to hear. I only ask that you allow me to say my piece before you hex me into oblivion.” His lips quirked in a wry smile. Remus’ heart clenched.

“One evening, I was spying on Dumbledore at the Dark Lord’s orders; he was interviewing a new teaching candidate. For the Divination post. She seemed as batty as every other seer I’d met, so I didn’t think much of it— until she began to make a genuine prophecy.”

Remus listened in dawning horror as Severus recited the words. “I was discovered before I could hear the end, but I took what I knew to the Dark Lord. It took several weeks for him to parse the meaning, but eventually he decided he knew enough.”

*Born as the seventh month dies.*