

“I thought this would be a good one to start with.” He dropped the memory in the basin, and offered Harry a smile. “Go on, cub.”

Heart pounding against his ribs, Harry lowered his hand to the silver liquid.

He immediately recognised his surroundings; it was a Gryffindor dormitory. There were only four beds in this one, and two of them were extraordinarily messy. But Harry wasn't looking at that.

His gaze was stuck on the four boys in the middle of the room.

The Marauders, all together. They looked around twelve or so — James Potter looked heartbreakingly familiar, though he was taller and less scrawny than Harry had been at that age. He was staring at little Remus Lupin, who had a look of utter horror on his face. “We’ve figured it out,” James declared, sounding incredibly pleased with himself. “You’re a werewolf, aren’t you?”

“What?” Remus yelped, voice cracking. “I— of course not! Dumbledore wouldn’t let a— a monster like that in a school!”

“You don’t have to lie to us, Remus,” Sirius insisted earnestly. There was a fading bruise around the rim of his eye, and Harry wondered if it was a prank gone wrong or something more sinister.

“Yeah,” little Peter Pettigrew agreed, voice shaking. Harry’s stomach burned with anger, even though this version of Peter had done nothing wrong. “We— we won’t tell anyone!”

“It makes sense, though. You’re always gone on the full moon — there’s no way you need to visit your aunt *that* much,” James continued. “You’ve always got those weird scratches after, too. You got a rash when you touched the silver cauldron in Potions the other week. And I saw your eyes glow when you got really angry at Snivellus.”

Remus’ face went bright red, and Harry wondered if even at this age, anger had not been the emotion James had sensed.

Then, he burst into tears. “I— I’m not going to hurt anyone,” he sobbed. “Please, I’ll go to Dumbledore, I’ll go home. You won’t have to room with me anymore. Just— just don’t tell the Ministry! They’ll lock me up!”

Harry saw James and Sirius share a look of horrified alarm, and immediately the two were bundling the blond boy in a hug. “Don’t be stupid! We aren’t going to tell anyone!” Sirius said. “And we don’t want you to leave!”

“You’re our friend, Rem!” James agreed, reaching back to yank Pettigrew into the group cuddle pile. “So what if you have a bit of a furry problem?”

The sound that came from Remus was halfway between a laugh and a hiccup. “It’s a bit more than that, James,” he retorted, still crying. “I turn into a huge bloodthirsty beast once a month!”