

Nothing happened.

He focused harder on the memory. “Expecto Patronum!”

A burst of silvery wisps shot out of the end of his wand, and Harry almost dropped it in shock. “Look! I did it! Sort of.” It wasn’t much, but it was a start.

“Well done, Harry!” Lupin enthused, his grin making him look so much like the young man in the back of the Potters’ wedding photo that Harry’s breath caught for a moment. “Are you ready to try it on a dementor?”

“Yeah,” Harry said, squaring his shoulders and facing the desk. “Let’s do it.” His blood roared in his ears, the happy memory at the forefront of his mind. Only... it wasn’t *entirely* there, the little voice in the back of his head reminding him that he was about to hear her again. His mother. The only time he ever heard her voice.

Lupin opened the packing case, and before Harry could truly brace himself the room went cold, a dark figure looming up above him. Harry’s hand shook as he tried to gather his happy thoughts. “Expecto Patronum!” The dementor grew closer, the world starting to go fuzzy around the edges for Harry, the scream building in the back of his mind. “Expecto Patronum!”

*Lily, take Harry and go! It’s him!*

It was a new voice. A male voice. White fog filled Harry’s vision. *I’ll hold him off!*

There was a crash, like a door bursting off its hinges.

“Harry! Harry, wake up!” The room was slowly warming. Harry became aware of two things; he was sprawled on the floor of the office, and Lupin was tapping him hard on the face.

“Harry! Merlin, are you alright? I’m so sorry, I should’ve eased you into it more, I—“

“It’s fine. I’m fine,” he croaked, sitting up and running a hand through his hair. He still felt shaky. Lupin thrust a chocolate frog towards him.

“I didn’t expect you to get it the first time. I would’ve been astounded if you had,” Lupin told him, still looking concerned.

“It’s getting worse,” Harry mumbled, thinking about what he’d just heard. That had to be... his father. James Potter’s voice. He’d never heard that before, either.

“If you want to stop, I completely understand—“

“No,” Harry insisted, biting the head off the chocolate frog. “I can do this. Let’s go again.”

Lupin made him wait until his hands no longer trembled, then helped him to his feet and moved towards the packing case. “You might want to try a happier memory,” he suggested. “It’s possible the one you were using wasn’t quite strong enough.”