

“It’s a shame you weren’t able to save my loyal servant from the dementors,” Voldemort hissed, his red eyes surveying Severus as he kneeled on the floor, shaking. “But he told me how much Dumbledore trusted you. He even began to doubt you himself, but I knew the truth. You have always been one of my most loyal servants, Severus.”

“I am honoured to remain so, my Lord.”

The meeting was short, and Severus was glad for it. The Dark Lord just wanted to reconnect; assess Severus’ loyalty, and instruct him to report back with any information on Dumbledore or Harry Potter. Severus felt he got off rather lightly, all things considered. He could still walk away under his own power, after all, even if he was bleeding from a few places.

Remus was waiting on the lawn when he apparated back to Seren Du, his dressing gown wrapped around him and a worried frown on his tired face. It was dark, but the lights were still on in the house. “Oh, Severus,” the Gryffindor murmured, hurrying to wind Severus’ arm over his shoulders and help him inside.

“Where’s Potter?” Severus didn’t want the boy seeing him like this.

“In his room, I sent him to bed. What do you need?”

“Nerve Tonic. Regular strength.” The line of Remus’ shoulders relaxed slightly; Severus wasn’t in need of the extra strength tonic yet.

“Ceri.” At Remus’ soft call, the house elf appeared. “Run a bath for Severus, please, and fetch a bottle of his Nerve Tonic.” Ceri nodded, and moments later small hands were pressing a vial into Severus’ empty palm. He checked the label, then downed it, not even flinching at the taste. It had been a while since he’d needed one of those.

They stumbled up the stairs together, Remus using his werewolf strength to keep Severus upright, and by the time they made it to the bathroom the bath was full and steaming. Severus rolled his eyes when Remus’ hands began to work at his robe. “I can do it,” he insisted, but Remus gently smacked his fingers away.

“Let me take care of you.” His voice cracked. Severus’ heart clenched. It couldn’t be any easier for Remus to watch him go than it was for him to leave himself. “Merlin, I’d hoped we were done with this the first time around.”

“Sadly not,” Severus bit out, wincing when several of his bleeding wounds were exposed to the open air as Remus unbuttoned his shirt. “Careful.”

Remus’ nostrils flared, and he sucked in a sharp breath. “Soon,” he vowed softly, helping Severus step out of his clothes. When he was naked, the werewolf’s eyes roamed over him critically. Severus resisted the urge to cover himself. Remus had seen him nude more times than he could count, but Severus couldn’t bear it when it was like this. Shaking and bleeding and still feeling filthy from kneeling at the Dark Lord’s feet.

A murmur of spells, and his wounds healed. Remus nudged him towards the bath. “Go on, it’ll help.”