

He left the kitchen, heading for the stairs, unbuttoning the collar of his robe. Was this what his future was to be like? A house full of people, all of whom knew plain as day that he was in love with Remus Lupin — people he could trust not to use that knowledge against him.

After an entire lifetime of sneaking around and covering their tracks and blatantly lying to most of their friends, Severus couldn't fathom it. He wondered if Remus felt the same, sometimes. Then again, the damned wolf was probably counting down the days until the Dark Lord was gone and he could shout his feelings from the rooftops.

Severus would never admit to the warmth that filled his chest at the prospect.

Sure enough, his partner was curled up in his usual spot in the library, a book in his lap and a cup of tea on the side table. He looked up at the sound of footsteps, and the bright smile that took over his face at the sight of Severus was, as always, enough to make his heart stutter. "Severus!" Remus greeted, setting his book down. "I wasn't sure you'd be able to get away this weekend. You've been so busy."

"*Too* busy," Severus grouched, sliding into the space at Remus' side, leaning in for a kiss. "But I told Harry and Draco to work amongst themselves for today. They both deserve a break — it seems the transition to NEWTs is just as jarring as it was when we were their age."

Remus smirked, happily curling against Severus' side. "I'm sure the boys are grateful." His amber eyes danced playfully. "I certainly am, to have you home."

Severus smirked, kissing his lover once more, relishing in the warm weight of Remus pressed against him. Merlin, a summer of sleeping by his wolf's side always made the first month of school nigh on unbearable.

"Albus will expect me at breakfast tomorrow," he relayed. "But I can stay the night as long as I leave early."

Remus beamed. "Perfect."

A second cup of tea appeared beside Remus', along with a small plate of chocolate biscuits. Remus hummed happily, reaching for both and handing Severus his cup. "So how are classes going? Have you grown used to teaching outside your dungeons yet?" he teased, making Severus snort.

"It will take more than a few weeks to break that habit," he said wryly. It was a good thing his quarters were still in the dungeons — that was no one would ever know how often he had automatically walked towards his old classroom to begin teaching. "Classes are... a mixed bag." Nibbling on a biscuit, he thought back over the classes he'd taught since taking the DADA position. "The second and third years are exactly as dismal as you'd expect." A year with Umbridge, and for the older students a year with Crouch posed as Moody — all too young to have been invited to Harry's secret defence club. "The first years are appropriately terrified."

Remus smirked. "Your legacy continues even without exploding cauldrons," he drawled, making Severus match his expression. "And fourth year up?"