

think they'd rather stay out of it, to be honest, but they know if war comes that's not going to be an option. If they fight and lose, they'll die; if they fight and win, they might gain a few more rights but they'll still probably die; and if they don't fight at all, they'll surely die as well in the end."

"There's always another option," Harry pointed out. Remus' eyebrows rose. "They fight with me — with us — and when we take back the Wizengamot we give them the rights they deserve." He'd already found several outrageous creature-related laws in his section of the Ministry Regulations book that he was planning on bringing to Susan's attention.

"You really plan to be that open against both Dumbledore and Voldemort?" Remus questioned.

"I think I'll have to be, don't you?" Harry couldn't imagine being able to get any of the things he needed while sticking under Dumbledore's shadow. "I'll keep acting dumb as long as I can, but I'm running out of time. I expect by the end of the year, Dumbledore will be onto me, so I might as well start playing against him now."

"It could come in useful, having the werewolf packs on our side," Snape agreed thoughtfully. "If they're willing to agree to it. A fifteen year-old boy isn't the most inspiring leader, even if he is the Boy-Who-Lived."

"Yeah, okay, fair point," Harry agreed. "But it can't hurt to offer, right? Let them know we'll be working on the legislation regardless, so if they want to stay out of it that's totally fine, but we'd appreciate the help if they want."

Remus was silent while he ate his éclair. "It's worth trying," he agreed eventually. "I'll keep it in mind next time I'm sent out there. I'll have to report to Albus at the next Order meeting that this wasn't exactly a success, so he'll probably ship me back out after a few months. Hell, half the wolves aren't even willing to believe Voldemort's back yet." He took a sip of his tea, eyes darting to one of the chocolate tarts. "Anyway, how have things been here? What have you two been up to?"

Harry grinned, bouncing in his seat a little. "I turned the tip of my nose black the other day while I was meditating!" he announced proudly. It was his first visible sign of the animagus transformation. Remus beamed at him.

"Harry, that's brilliant! Tell me everything." He kicked off his shoes and wedged his feet under Snape's thigh, earning a half-hearted eye roll. Harry happily told the man about the minor transformation, and how it had taken a few hours for him to undo it.

Yes, the house was far too quiet without Remus around.