

approached the wolf eagerly. Remus had told him what to do here, too; let Moony get his scent, get used to him. Then they could play.

The wolf seemed even bigger, now Harry was so small. The fox sat patiently, keen-eyed and braced to sprint if the wolf should decide it didn't like what it saw. A large muzzle bumped against the side of his jaw, hot breath tickling his fur as Moony inspected him from tip to tail, circling him with wary gold eyes. Mischief didn't flinch. A few feet away, Padfoot stood watching the whole exchange, ready to intervene if needed.

Moony took a step back, then huffed, nudging Mischief with his huge head — a distinctly playful gesture.

The fox grinned, and took off.

In the back of the fox-led mind, Harry's human self was practically shouting in glee at getting to run with the wolf and the dog, all three of them headed for the woods. He darted between larger bodies, yipping excitedly as Padfoot chased after him and Moony followed close behind.

He and Padfoot had run together before, but it was nothing like this. Nothing so... freeing. So exuberant. This was the three of them giving in to their animal instincts, letting Moony truly be himself under the light of the moon. As he ducked and dodged between trees, following interesting scent trails and jumping on his two companions, Harry wistfully imagined a time in the future when there was a shadow overhead, a whisper of white feathers following them from above. Perhaps even two shadows; Snape might be persuaded to make the transformation, now he would not be the only avian among them. Draco would enjoy flying with his godfather.

They ended up in a clearing, a place the two canines were evidently familiar with; the space was layered with the scents of the two of them from many months past, other animals steering clear of a place claimed by the predators so blatantly. Moony and Padfoot wrestled playfully, and Mischief didn't hesitate to throw himself into the mix, taking advantage of his smaller size to live up to his nickname and trip the pair up, even clambering on top of the werewolf at one point to the sound of Padfoot's barked amusement.

Harry's heart raced with joy, even as the three of them slowed down in their play and made to settle in for the night. Padfoot trotted over, swiping his tongue over Mischief's head and chuffing at the disgruntled look it earned. He wasn't sure how much of the night had passed, the moon still bright overhead, but already he knew he would very happily do this every full moon for as long as he could.

Sirius had tried to explain what it was like, back when Harry had first expressed interest in joining them on full moon nights. But he'd always insisted it was something that couldn't truly be described, that the feeling of *pack* was unlike anything else in the world. Harry hadn't fully understood what he meant until now.

There were no human feelings he could put to this, not that would do it justice.