

Fucking Azkaban.

But luckily Sirius was fine with falling apart on a weekend, so he gave a small nod — and as if she'd been waiting for the signal, Ceri popped silently into the room, levitating a lap tray. Charlie slowly manoeuvred them both into a sort-of sitting position, Sirius still tucked securely against his side. He took the tray from Ceri with a grateful smile, and the elf bobbed her head. Before she left, she clicked her fingers, and the fire in the grate jumped to life.

Sirius had chosen this bedroom for a reason.

The room was warm enough already, but it was clear the dog animagus couldn't feel it, his whole body strung tight against Charlie. But he showed at least a little interest in the food Ceri had brought them, and with a little encouragement he was eating.

"Was it your dreams, or just... one of those days?" Charlie asked, and Sirius shrugged.

"Dreams, I think. Dunno. Just... cold. Empty."

Charlie knew the word wasn't referring to his surroundings, but himself. His heart squeezed tighter.

"It's going to be gorgeous out today. We could read outside for a while, by the fire pit?"

"I promised the boys I'd help them with apparition training today," Sirius rasped in protest.

"Let Moony do it," Charlie urged. "You know his only plans for the day were sitting in Snape's lab and trying to flirt him into bollocksing up a potion."

That got a tiny huff of laughter out of the dark-haired man, and Charlie's whole chest filled with pride. Small steps.

They stayed in their warm nest of a room until Charlie was sure the sun would be up, and then they slowly got dressed — soft, well-worn jeans, long-sleeved t-shirt, Charlie's old Gryffindor quidditch hoodie that Sirius had claimed when they'd moved in together. Comfortable clothes, clothes that wouldn't remind him of Azkaban.

Outside it was already warm, but leaving their room had Sirius shivering again.

The fire in the fire pit built quickly with a wave of Charlie's wand, and another wave had one of the benches transfigured into a comfy divan, just wide enough for both of them. Charlie laid down and pulled Sirius to lie between his legs, head on his chest. A thin layer of sweat had already formed on Charlie's skin.

Sirius' hands were still like ice.

The animagus turned his face up to the sun with the most genuine smile Charlie had seen from him all day, and the redhead stroked a hand down Sirius' side, sliding it beneath the hoodie and shirt to touch bare skin. Physical contact helped — often, Sirius couldn't decide between wearing a hundred layers to stave off the cold, or going entirely naked to get as much skin pressed against him as possible.