

Severus leaned back in his chair. It was clear from the look on his face that he had no idea what Remus was talking about. “Watch him,” Remus suggested. “Don’t think about James. Look for Lily, and you’ll see it. You’ll see it in spades. *Merlin*.” Having those green eyes fixed on him sometimes felt like he’d gone back in time. It was almost too much to bear.

“If you insist,” Severus droned. “What does it matter where he lives, anyway? Going to steal him away in the night?”

“Albus sent him to Petunia.” That got Severus’ attention. The Slytherin stiffened, his shoulders hunching the barest fraction just at the woman’s name.

“What?”

“Harry told me he lives with his Aunt Petunia and her family.” Harry had inadvertently admitted quite a bit more than that. Remus’ protective instincts roared when he thought too much about it.

“What in Merlin’s name was Albus thinking?” Severus said, eyes sharp. “Petunia? That woman hated everything to do with magic!”

“He didn’t know anything about his parents. Didn’t know about magic before his Hogwarts letter.” Remus swallowed harshly. “Severus, he said he didn’t even know his *name* until he was five years old. I don’t think he realised I heard him, but— imagine the sorts of things they must have called him instead. You knew Petunia better than I did, and her husband.”

“The worst example of muggles I can think of,” Severus agreed. He looked up, his face unguarded for once, his displeasure clear. “You’re sure? Albus took him to *her*?” Remus nodded.

On the other side of the desk, an inkwell shattered. “Lily must have been spinning in her grave for the last twelve years,” Severus growled, cleaning up the mess with a jab of his wand. “If she were here, she’d kill us both for never checking on him.”

“Albus never let me,” Remus supplied. He didn’t doubt that Severus had never tried. His hatred for James Potter was a strong, strong thing. “He said it was safer if no one magical went near him.”

“Of course he did,” Severus sneered. He met Remus’ gaze knowingly. “Keeping his precious golden boy nice and hidden away and downtrodden, starving for information — probably starving for food, too, by the look of him.”

“Ready for the day that Albus Dumbledore swoops in and takes him away from that awful place, showing him a world of magic and becoming his true saviour,” Remus finished grimly. “Severus, you don’t really think—“

“That Albus would manipulate a boy so young? If it benefited the *greater good*, I have no doubt he would.”