that. You know we kissed once when we were drunk fifth years and it was the worst kiss of my entire life."

"He might've gotten better since then," Severus muttered. Remus snorted.

"If you want to go find out, by all means, go ahead," he retorted dryly. "But I have *zero* interest in doing so."

"Does he know that?"

"Of course he does! Severus, my God, a blind man could see the way I look at you like you hung the whole Merlin-damned Milky Way!" He sucked in a sharp breath, his heart breaking that even after all these years, Severus still just *didn't get it*. "Sirius has been through *hell*. Over a decade surrounded by dementors, then hiding in the Forbidden Forest living off rats. He hadn't had a comforting touch since before Lily and James died, til he came here. He still has nightmares about being back in that place! Sometimes he needs someone to be there just to remind him he's not alone. If I can be that person for my best friend, my *brother*, then you bet your arse I will. And I… I lost *everything* that night. I lost my pack, I lost my place in the wizarding world, I lost *you*. I've got most of it back, and I'm *so grateful* for every day I get to keep it. I lost Sirius for thirteen years. I need him, Severus. Not the same way I need you, but I need him all the same. *Please* don't begrudge me that. Know that I only ever want you. You're my heart, Severus, you have been since we were bloody thirteen!"

He had tears in his eyes now, his grip on Severus' shoulders turning desperate. He couldn't bear it if Severus ever tried to make him choose between him and Sirius. "You need that affection," Severus said knowingly. "The affection I can never give you."

"I don't care!" Remus burst out in frustration. "I'm not ashamed of loving you. I didn't hide it from Harry, I won't hide it from Sirius — I'd announce it in the bloody *Prophet* if it wouldn't risk both our lives. You're more reserved, I understand that completely, and I love that about you. But don't tell me you can't give me affection when you show it to me *all the time*. It's not the typical public affection, but I've never expected that, Severus. I've never doubted your love for me, *please* don't insult me by doubting mine for you. Cuddling with Sirius — especially when he's a dog, Merlin! — It's nothing more than platonic comfort. I won't give that up. But I need you to trust me."

Severus breathed deep into the silence that stretched between them, until his anguished eyes opened to meet Remus' once more. "You're not the only one who lost everything that night, Remus," he said eventually, every word dripping with pain. "I had to live through the aftermath. I had to *carry on*. Forgive me if I find it hard to believe we're done hurting each other."

Remus gripped the front of the man's robes, pulling him into a furious kiss, trying to shove every ounce of what he was feeling into the embrace. It was messy, with teeth clashing and a desperate little groan ripping from Severus' throat, and they were both breathing hard when he pulled away. "Believe it, Severus Snape," Remus declared firmly. He was never more sure of anything in his life. "We are *done*. Darkness is coming, but whatever may happen, we will face it side by side, *on the same team*, and if *anything* wants to get to you it's going to have to go through me, because we are *done* hurting each other and you are *mine*." The last word was