

“I’ll still see them plenty. But they’re not much for the winter; half of them are snuggled up in their nests ’til spring.” He gave the full force of that dimpled smile in Sirius’ direction, and the animagus felt the urge to press his thumbs into the divots of those cheeks — preferably as he got up close and personal with the inside of Charlie’s mouth.

He swallowed hard. “That’s good, then. The more the merrier, round here.”

“All we need is Dad healed up and back home, and it’ll be a proper party,” Charlie agreed. His eyes sparkled, the sapphire blue catching the light beautifully. “Maybe if I’m a good boy I’ll get my Christmas wish early.”

“Oh?” Sirius shouldn’t, he should get up, walk away— this was wrong, he couldn’t, he *shouldn’t*.

And yet as the dragon tamer leaned in, his intentions clear, Sirius could do nothing but tilt his chin up and accept the kiss.

It was short, and relatively chaste, but it rattled Sirius right down to his very *bones*. He hadn’t kissed someone in years — since before Azkaban — and he wasn’t sure if the dementors had tarnished his memories or if Charlie was just *that good*, but it felt incredible.

Charlie didn’t push his luck, and pulled back after a few moments. But there was a pleased light in his eyes and a flush across his lightly tanned cheeks. His hand rested on Sirius’ knee, palm like a brand through the denim of Sirius’ jeans. “That wasn’t a good idea,” Sirius whispered weakly. Charlie’s lips twitched, amused.

“Wasn’t it? Felt pretty good to me.”

Sirius felt his own cheeks redden. “Charlie, I— I’m flattered. But we can’t. We shouldn’t. I’m too old for you, for Merlin’s sake; I’m an escaped convict. Your mother would kill me.”

“None of those reasons are that you don’t fancy me back,” Charlie said knowingly. Sirius stayed silent; he couldn’t argue that. Charlie would know it was a lie.

“We shouldn’t,” he repeated instead. Charlie darted forward to press a kiss to the corner of his mouth, his nose pressing briefly against Sirius’ cheek.

“I’m old enough to know what I want, Sirius,” he breathed. “And I want you, *very much*. I think we’d go well together.” Then he grinned roguishly, and Sirius’ stomach flared with heat. “But if you need a bit of convincing, I’m happy to oblige.”

Getting up from the chair with catlike grace, he passed in front of Sirius — giving the animagus an eyeful of those powerful thighs and shapely arse in very tight jeans — and trailed his fingers across the line of Sirius’ shoulder. “I’ll see you at dinner.” A flutter of a smirk. “Great album choice, by the way. I’m more of a Diamond Dogs fan myself. Maybe we can compare collections sometime.”

He strode confidently from the room, leaving Sirius alone once more; feeling very much like he might be in over his head.