

“Yeah, fine,” he insisted. “Just didn’t sleep well. Too quiet in the hospital wing.”

“I suppose you didn’t even have Professor Lupin for company. I’m glad he’s feeling better, though.”

“Yeah,” Ron cut in. “No more lessons with Snape.”

“Except Potions,” Harry pointed out dryly, earning a wounded look.

“Don’t ruin it, Harry.”

Professor Lupin shot them a pointed look across the classroom, and Harry sheepishly turned back to his work.

After class, Harry made an excuse to his friends and lingered at his desk, waiting for the rest of the class to file out. Lupin raised an enquiring eyebrow. “Can I help you, Harry?”

“So, uh. The dementors. You, uh, saw what happens to me when they come near me.”

“It’s understandable, Harry; there are horrors in your past that others haven’t experienced,” Lupin soothed. Harry shook his head.

“I know, I know, but I still don’t want to be fainting every time I see one.”

“If it helps, Professor Dumbledore was furious with them — I don’t think he’s going to let them get close again.”

“Why did they come the first time?” Harry asked bitterly.

“They’re getting hungry,” was Lupin’s response. “They’re used to being in Azkaban, with all that emotion to keep them going. Being out here, unable to go near anyone, and then feeling all the joy and excitement from the match... they couldn’t resist.”

“When they come close, I can hear my mum dying,” Harry admitted. Lupin froze.

“Lily?” he said eventually, the lines on his face making him look older than his thirty-three years. “Oh, Harry.” He reached out, hesitating for only a moment before squeezing Harry’s shoulder.

“I want it to stop,” Harry breathed desperately. “When S— when Professor Snape covered for you, he said something about a spell that can be used to ward off dementors. Is that the thing you did on the train?” Lupin nodded. “Can you teach me?”

“Harry, the Patronus charm is an incredibly advanced bit of magic. Many adults can’t do one, let alone a third year student.”

“Try me,” Harry retorted. His magic had been buzzing under his skin since the goblins had removed the block. Maybe some advanced magic was just what he needed.