

He didn't think all the madly snogging teenage couples at Hogwarts counted. He couldn't imagine Snape and Remus acting like the Weasleys, with their frequent pecks on the cheek and terms of endearment. He thought Snape might explode if Remus ever called him 'sweetheart', or 'darling'. Yet he didn't doubt Remus for a second when he said Snape loved him. He just didn't think he would ever hear the professor say the words.

As Remus predicted, Sirius shuffled down the stairs in his pyjamas once the smell of bacon started filling the house, still half-asleep by the looks of it. He ran a fond hand over Harry's hair as he passed. "Morning, pup." He slumped into his seat. "Ceri, everything smells amazing."

"You're being late, Master Sirius," Ceri said in reply, floating the breakfast plates over to the table. Sirius shot her a dazzling grin.

"But you waited for me anyway, because you're wonderful." The house elf blushed, turning back to the stove.

Ceri was very different to Dobby, in so many ways. Harry wondered which was a more accurate example of house elves.

"So," Sirius said once everyone had started eating. "Rules of the house." Harry eyed him in trepidation, and Sirius laughed. "Don't look so scared, pup. It's just a few things. Number one; no flying without telling one of us first, and certainly not after dark." That was reasonable; Harry could get hurt flying at night. "Number two; don't go into the woods unsupervised. There's all sorts of things that'll gobble you up in there." Again, reasonable. "Number three; there's a potions lab in the basement, it's now Snape's domain. Don't go down there unless he specifically asks you to. Some of the things he brews are sensitive." Harry had no desire to go in Snape's potions lab, so he nodded quickly. "Number four; expect retaliation for any pranks played."

At this, Remus buried his head in his hands with a long-suffering sigh. "No prank wars, Padfoot."

"But Moony!" Sirius whined, sounding younger than Harry. "We just want a little fun!"

Remus looked from Sirius, to Harry, to Snape, who raised an eyebrow. "If they prank me, you can be sure I will retaliate," he said unrepentantly. Remus sighed.

"You're just as bad as he is. Fine, rule five — no permanent or potentially harmful pranks," he warned sternly, using his Professor Voice.

"Ugh, fine. Spoilsport," Sirius muttered. "Carrying on. Rule six; no going outside on the full moon. Remus has his potion, but we're not taking any chances. And finally, rule seven; ask if you need help. With anything. Whether it's help with a spell, or your homework, or if you just need someone to talk to; all three of us are happy to help however we can. You don't need to handle everything by yourself anymore Got it?"

"I— I'll try." It would be a hard habit to break, and Harry could make no promises. Sirius nodded; that was enough for him.