

dragged along for the ride. “I... I like it, though.” Mischief wasn’t a bad name, for a fox.

That made Sirius brighten up, and he ruffled Harry’s hair. “Mischief it is, then,” he decided, just as they reached the entrance hall. To Harry’s surprise, Remus was already there; alone, wearing nothing but a pair of flannel pyjama bottoms, his shoulders tense.

“You hear that, Moony?” Sirius said, grinning at his best friend. “We’re sticking with Mischief. You can tell the old bat he’s now officially contributed to the Marauders’ legacy.”

Remus chuckled. “I’m sure he’ll be thrilled,” he said dryly, then turned to Harry. “You’re ready, then? You know what to do if... if things don’t go well?”

“Straight back in the house, let Padfoot deal with you,” Harry recited, as if they hadn’t been over it a million times before even considering allowing him to join in. “It’ll be fine, Remus. We’ll have fun.”

All Remus managed was a tight half-smile, and then he sucked in a sharp breath, his eyes flashing gold. “I need to go,” he declared, sharing a look with Sirius and then slipping out the front door.

Harry knew how it would go — Sirius had explained that Remus never let anyone see him in the act of transforming if he could help it. As children the other Marauders had waited outside the Shack for their friend, and now they would offer Remus the same privacy by staying inside the house until the transformation was complete.

Having seen the transformation as a third year, Harry could understand Remus wanting to do that alone.

And so they waited, listening as human screams became lupine howls. Harry’s stomach churned; normally he was in his room at this point, under a Silencing charm so he didn’t have to listen. It was awful, knowing that Remus was going through such pain and there was nothing any of them could do about it. Even though Remus brushed it off, insisted that it had been much worse before the Wolfsbane, that he barely even felt it now.

At last, there was a scratch at the door; the signal that the transformation was complete.

Sirius looked at Harry, grey eyes bright and lips tugging in a challenging grin. He winked, then in an instant there was a huge black dog stood there, staring expectantly up at Harry. Harry didn’t waste time; a twist of his magic, and he too was on four paws, his senses shifting in a way he was becoming increasingly familiar with. Instantly, he could smell the wolf on the other side of the door; Remus’ usual scent still present but overwhelmed by the scent of the predator within him, brought to the surface by the light of the moon.

Sirius nudged at the house wards, opening the door, and for the second time in his life Harry stood face to face with a fully transformed werewolf.

But he had no fear, this time. He knew Remus was in control, knew the wolf would not see the fox as a threat — he bounded out past Padfoot, paws hitting the still-warm grass as he