

Harry knew they didn't mean it, knew they were only spouting the same crap their parents said, the crap they were *expected* to say, but it still hurt to see Hagrid's smile get more and more tense with every remark.

He let out a tiny sigh of relief when Umbridge finally made her way back towards the castle, but the damage had been done. Hagrid was anxious, fumbling his words for the remainder of the lesson, and none of the students were properly paying attention. Which was a shame, because Harry was actually quite keen to learn more about thestrals.

"That was the worst inspection yet," Neville muttered when they were on the path back to the castle at the end of the lesson. Harry had tried to hang back for Hagrid, but Hermione had swooped right in and started lecturing him about all the things he needed to do to make sure Umbridge didn't fire him, so Harry left them to it.

"He's doomed," Harry agreed morosely. The only saving grace would be Dumbledore stepping in before Umbridge could do anything permanent.

For once, Harry was desperately praying that the headmaster would ignore the rules for his own benefit. Hogwarts wasn't Hogwarts without Hagrid.

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Remus' whole body ached as he apparated onto the lawn at Seren Du, the welcoming magic of the wards washing over him as he stepped through. "Ceri," he called, and the elf appeared at his side. "Would you please find Severus when he's next alone and tell him I'm back?"

All he wanted to do was take a nice long bath, and see his partner.

Thankfully, it wasn't long until he had both; Severus arrived at the manor while Remus was soaking in their obnoxiously large bathtub. He strode into the bathroom, still in his teaching robes, and something in Remus eased at the sight of him. "Hello, love. I've missed you."

With a wave of Severus' hand, all his buttons from collars to cuffs undid at the same time. "Are you injured?" the Slytherin asked, low voice flooded with concern. Remus shook his head, watching happily as the man stripped down to his skin.

"No, no; not unless being too damn old to spend a whole moon running through the woods counts as an injury," he joked. Severus rolled his eyes, stepping into the hot water. Remus made room for him, angling for a kiss.

"You're not old, you're thirty-five," Severus muttered. Remus laughed, resting his head on the man's bony shoulder, inhaling the lingering scent of potions' ingredients.

"I'm fine, honestly," he assured, letting his body curve against his partner's, muscles relaxing. "How are you? How are things at the school?" *How's Harry*, he wanted to ask, but from the look on Severus' face the question was implied regardless.

"Umbridge continues to terrorise the students and staff. Hagrid has returned, which has given her a new target." Remus winced, imagining how awful that woman was being to the poor