

Wisdom from Padfoot

by IrishEspressoGirl

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Chapter 1 of 1

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"Cheer up, mate," Sirius said as he slid onto the bench next to James Potter in N.E.W.T.-level Charms.

James, who was staring forlornly at the Head Girl, didn't respond. His multiple attempts at winning Lily's affections had failed, and James had been in a funk for a few weeks.

"This came in the owl-post this morning. You weren't at breakfast," Sirius whispered, passing James a folded piece of parchment.

On it was scribbled what looked like a three-versed poem.

Like others of my kind,

I've buried my treasures

for too long a time.

I've hidden my heart,

but, James, my dear,

I hope we never part.

Call to me and I'll come;

I only need you to speak.

As assuredly as the Snitch you catch,

anything you desire, for you I'll fetch.

Follow your heart,

or dog your feet.

You must be stalwart,

and soon it's me you'll meet.

James was a bit puzzled by the odd lyrics, but hope that it might be from Lily caused him to ignore the enigma of the poem. "Who do you think it's from?" James whispered to Sirius, having realized at once that it must have been from a secret admirer.

"I don't know." Sirius grinned and shrugged. "Although I did pass a certain red-haired witch on my way to the Owlery yesterday."

"But this doesn't look anything like her handwriting," James lamented.

"No worries, mate." Sirius comforted his best friend. "She's probably using one of those Clandestine Calamus things. You know, the quills that disguise your handwriting. They're perfect for being mysterious. They just got them in at Zonko's."

James shrugged and scrawled on a piece of parchment, *'Dear Evans, You don't have to hide anymore. I know you're my secret admirer. The wizard of your dreams, James.'* He levitated it over to her, knowing that tiny Professor Flitwick wouldn't notice.

A moment later, a crumpled piece of parchment knocked him in the head. Unfolding it, he read Lily's meticulously neat handwriting.

Dear Potter,

You've got to be kidding me.

Truly disgusted,

Lily

"Well, that didn't work too well," he whispered to Sirius, who was stifling laughter next to him.

"What's the deal with Evans? I'm beginning to think she'll never go out with me." James was sulking in Gryffindor Tower, and the poor Snitch that he'd nicked during fifth year was suffering for it. If James wasn't careful, he was going to crush its wings.

"Well, since I'm the resident expert on the modern witch, let me enlighten you," Sirius said without a trace of sarcasm. "You probably ought to lay off a bit and let her see that you're not a – what was it? An 'arrogant toerag.'"

"But I'm not—" James started before remembering what he'd written in the note to Lily. "Oh. I guess you're right."

"Evans, wait up!" James called after Charms a few weeks later. After Sirius's advice, he'd been quite the contrite wizard.

"Lily, I'm sorry I've been a world-class git," he started, catching up with her although she hadn't stopped. "Can I buy you a Butterbeer at the Three Broomsticks during the next Hogsmeade weekend?"

Lily stopped, looking him up and down appraisingly. James thought he caught a twitch of a smile on her mouth.

"Okay, then," she answered finally. "But leave your sidekick in the castle." She nodded towards where Sirius was standing, watching and listening, slack-jawed.

James, stunned, didn't respond at first. He could only watch as Lily walked away, her red hair swaying after her. "Alright then," he whispered to himself.

"Close your mouth, Padfoot," James teased, having already recovered from the shock. "Wouldn't want something to fly in. We can do magic, you know."

James punctuated the jibe with a friendly elbow to Sirius's gut. Unfortunately, Sirius jerked in response to the elbow, and his book satchel fell to the ground, its contents scattering.

James bent to help Sirius gather his belongings and discovered a long, thin black quill. James picked up the unfamiliar quill to examine it.

"Oy! What's this, mate? Didn't get an Auto-Answer Quill without tell—" James stopped. Silver embossing on the quill's shaft revealed that it was a Clandestine Calamus.

Slowly, James realized that a trick had been played on him. "You wrote that sappy poem? No wonder it was so terrible!" James laughed, smacking Sirius in the head.

"Oy!" Sirius exclaimed, rubbing the back of his head. "I poured my heart and soul into that poem! I even had to use a dictionary. Have some respect."

Author's Notes: In *Snape's Worst Memory* during OotP, Lily calls James an "arrogant, bullying toerag" (OotP 647), and Sirius shows his insight by telling James that she probably thinks he's conceited (OotP 649).

Anyway, my apologies for subjecting you to Sirius's poem. He put a lot into writing it.

Wisdom from Padfoot was written for *Romancing the Wizard's Challenge Nineteen: Bring Out Your Dead!* The guidelines required the story to be exactly 750 words, incorporate the idea of the prompt "solving a mystery," and include an original magical device.

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