

Chains

by *LiteraryBeauty*

Remus and Severus have an understanding. They give each other what they need most. But things are never that simple, especially when the other Marauders are involved.

Oneshot

Chapter 1 of 1

Remus and Severus have an understanding. They give each other what they need most. But things are never that simple, especially when the other Marauders are involved.

Remus had barely passed through the door of the darkened dungeon classroom when he was grabbed and pushed solidly against the wall. Hands immediately sought his and drew them above his head, holding them against the cool stone wall. The door was warded, as always, with a whispered spell...the remembrance of which always impressed Remus, especially when he was in no condition to actually remember it himself.

In the dark, he shouldn't have been able to see. No one else could have. But this close to the full moon, its silver tendrils encircled him even when he couldn't see it. There were no windows in this room, but it was night, and the moon was high and rounded, whispering, soothing. His eyesight was better than usual, and he could make out the outline of that which he desired most.

"Severus," he moaned, feigning a small struggle against the hand that brutally, tenderly held his wrists high.

There was no answer except a body pressed hard against his, unforgiving, loving. A hardness to rival his own pressed into him, a slim leg sliding between his thighs, pressing against his groin and *insisting*. He tried to lean forward to catch his lover's lips, but that wasn't part of the game.

Severus chuckled, pulling back just out of Remus' reach. His unoccupied hand travelled lightly over Remus' robes, parting them and the shirt beneath. Remus felt the inevitable but slowly dissipating sense of shame when his scars were bared, but knew that Severus' scars were impressive in their own right, thanks to an overzealous father. They were both slaves, but together... together they were autonomous. Free.

Remus let his head fall back against the wall. Some nights, Severus let Remus have some control, and some nights, he even let Remus lead. But tonight, and on any night where the moon was reaching fullness, Severus liked to dominate. He said it was more of a challenge on nights like these, because the wolf in Remus wanted to fight back, to *own*. Other nights, when Remus was in control and the wolf little more than a niggling tension in the back of his mind, Severus said he submitted too easily, too quickly. He liked Remus to fight.

Remus bucked his hips off the wall, trying to force the body off of him. In reality, it was the last thing he wanted, but he would play the game, because there really were no losers. In response, Severus grabbed his hip and slammed him back against the sharp stone, surely bruising his back. He stepped closer, so his entire body was pressed against Remus', and the young werewolf moaned through gritted teeth, the pain only adding to the layers of desire that only flooded him when confronted with Severus Snape.

It shouldn't have worked, it really shouldn't have. They were too alike in the things that didn't matter, and too different in the things that did. Yet here they were, bodies moulded together like they were made that way, and finally, finally Snape's mouth crashed onto his. It was inelegant and hasty, and Snape had no mind for the subtleties of seduction at this point in his youth. But Remus didn't need to be seduced, so he returned the kiss with equal and opposite force, pushing forward to get Snape to back up

just an inch so Remus could have a small victory.

After a few minutes, the kiss slowed from a burning passion to an exploration. Remus loved this part. It was as though Severus had forgotten how Remus tasted, how he felt, and he wanted nothing more than to remind himself of everything Remus was. His tongue probed and gently slid against Remus', and the hand that had been pinning his hip travelled up his body, brushing lightly across his nipples to his shoulder and then around to the back of his neck. Severus gently released the hands he was holding above Remus' head, and they stayed there for a moment before lowering to Severus' shoulders. The tenderness of the kiss belied the true passion beneath the surface, but it couldn't be contained for long.

"I want you," Severus whispered, lowering his mouth to Remus' neck and sucking harshly on the silky flesh there. Remus nodded slightly, in total agreement.

"I want you in a bed, Lupin. Not in a classroom. I hate this."

Remus sighed, half at the use of his last name upon which Severus *insisted*, even though he knew how Remus felt, and half at the knowledge that what they were doing would wreak havoc upon both their houses, not to mention making Snape easy fodder for the Marauders. *Easier fodder*.

"It won't be long until we graduate, and then we can do whatever we want. No one to tell us what to do, no one to hide from," Remus said diplomatically.

Severus rested his forehead against Remus' shoulder. "No one is telling us *now*! You're just too scared to stand up to your friends. Shouldn't they be happy that you're happy? Don't I make you happy?" His words were forceful, but Remus easily recognized the vulnerability beneath them.

"I just don't want things to get worse for you. It's easier this way, for everyone." Remus was always trying to make him understand, but it was hard when all Remus himself wanted was to kiss his boyfriend goodbye in public, study with him in the library, and take him to Hogsmeade on weekends.

"It's going to be just as ugly when we're done school, you know. They will always hate me, and I can't promise I won't feel the same. But all I care about... all I want is you."

Remus gathered the taller boy into his arms. It was rare that he was treated to such tender effusions, and he wanted to relish it before one of them inevitably ruined it. To stave off the dissolution of the moment, Remus took Severus' lips in a kiss. In a reversal of their last, this kiss started out slowly, building and sparking until it was frenzied and nearly wild. Severus regained his control by taking away Remus', grinding slowly against the smaller body and pulling his shirt down without unbuttoning the cuffs, effectively trapping Remus' arms.

Severus smirked and, holding Remus body against the wall while Remus bit his lip in anticipation, withdrew a silver pocket watch from his coat. Remus closed his eyes and *groaned*, wanting desperately what he knew was coming.

Severus closed his eyes at the sound, but seemed to catch himself fairly quickly. He took the watch off the long chain and put it back into his coat, which he threw over an abandoned desk chair.

"Look at me," Severus demanded, holding the silver chain up in front of Remus' eyes. He did as he was bade, his golden eyes darkening in lust as his body responded to the memory of that chain. Severus whispered a spell and Remus watched with barely concealed desire as the chain lengthened and thickened until it was a few feet long and more substantial and sturdy, but still slender. Severus walked over to the desk and put the chain down. He unbuttoned his shirt as Remus watched, his own arms still pinned in his shirt. He yanked at it briefly, but knew his lover would free him in his own time.

Sure enough, Severus beckoned to him with one hand, and Remus followed as he always did. Remus loved the way Severus was so completely in control, because they both knew control would be only a memory in a few minutes, and despite their games, Remus knew Severus considered him an equal. It had become more than just sex some time ago, and now they were only waiting until the insecurities were settled.

Severus ripped the shirt from the Gryffindor's body, bruising his wrists with the force. Remus gasped, eyelids fluttering closed. He wanted to put his arms around Severus, wanted to kiss him and lick him and devour him, but that wasn't allowed, not now. Later, when they were satisfied, Remus would be allowed to touch and taste freely. But now, Severus was in charge, and Remus had no problem playing by the rules.

"Do you want this, Lupin?"

Remus nodded at the oft-asked question. He understood the need for it, given the games they played.

"Say it."

"I want this, Severus. I want you," Remus stated, quietly but clearly. Severus hauled him back into his arms, kissing him bruisingly, beautifully. Remus succumbed, allowing Severus to dominate the kiss the way he liked, admitting the probing tongue, allowing it to delve deep and meeting it stroke for stroke. Severus moaned, and Remus felt triumphant. Their bodies were pressed together as though they were one form, hips moving in smooth but incendiary circles.

Severus slowly unzipped Remus' pants, hands caressing skin as he pushed the last of Remus' clothing to the ground, trapping his feet and freeing his erection. Severus smiled slightly as he traced one finger up his eager cock, finger sliding through the precum that was glistening at the tip. Remus watched with starving eyes, and Severus raised his moistened finger to the werewolf's lips, rubbing the liquid in and then kissing and sucking it away. Remus kept his hands at his side, his eyes falling on the silver chain when Severus broke the kiss.

"Eager, are we, wolf?" He picked up the chain and trailed it through his fingers, weighing it and fingering the links.

Remus bit his lip until it was bloodless, nodding and meeting the inky eyes.

"Put your hands behind your back," Snape demanded in that horrible, lovely low voice, and Remus had no choice but to obey, hands crossing behind his back.

Severus stepped behind him, wrapping the chain around the palm of his own hand. With the same hand, he trailed his fingertips over Remus' back and shoulder blades, over his shoulder and to his neck. Remus trembled, knowing what was coming, what was *so close*, but unable to bring it about faster.

Severus placed the softest of kisses against the nape of his neck, breathing warmly and making Remus shiver. The hand with the chain that had been ghosting over his neck finally pressed flat against it, the silver chain cool and then immediately hot against his shivering flesh.

The silver against his neck burned, oh, Merlin, it *burned* so deliciously, like frostbite against his neck, simultaneously biting and soothing. The pain was almost, *almost* more than Remus could handle, and he dropped his head back against Severus' chest and *keened*, the burning alighting his veins and making him so blissfully alive.

Severus abruptly removed the silver chain from his neck, and Remus remembered the first time he'd felt the burn of silver against his human flesh and actually enjoyed it. It hadn't been in this room but one very like it, and it had been one of their first meetings. They were still shy and awkward, both wanting and neither asking. They'd had sex before, but it was quick and desperate, with no time for foreplay or discovery. But maybe Severus had seen something in his eyes, or maybe he'd just felt the need that day, but he'd grabbed Remus' shirtfront, yanking him forward in a gorgeous meshing of lips, tongues and teeth. Severus had ripped his shirt off, and trailed his hands over the smaller boy's arms, and through the passion of the kiss, Remus had felt a trail of cold fire following the heat of his lover's hand, and he'd gasped, grabbing the hand to still it. He'd looked at it, taking in the sterling silver ring adorning Severus' right ring finger. Severus had noticed his look and must have realized what had happened, because he'd immediately went to remove it, looking chagrined and maybe even a little horrified. Remus only held his hand still, thinking hard about the pleasure/pain. Then, meeting Severus' eyes in what might have been a challenge, he'd placed the slender, ringed hand against his own bare chest, hissing at the sting, cock throbbing in response. He'd moved the hand so the silver ring made contact with his tight nipple, and his hips had jerked forward against Severus', aroused beyond comprehension. Something akin to delight settled in Severus' eyes and he'd used one hand to unbutton Remus' trousers. Not breaking the eye contact, he'd lightly caressed Remus' straining cock, silver only

just brushing the shaft, and Remus had cried out, closing his fist over the lightly touching hand, forcing it to stroke him *once twice* before he came with a wild cry. Severus had licked the come off his hand, from the silver ring, and that had been the point when they'd realized they each had something the other needed desperately.

In werewolf form, contact with silver could kill him. A touch from Severus' ring would have burned his animal flesh, causing it to smoulder and curl. But in human form, it was a sharp burn, a tight sting that made his eyes roll back in his head if applied the right way.

And Severus knew the right way.

Severus began to wrap the length of the chain around Remus' wrists, still crossed behind his back. He was bound tightly, but no knot was made with the metal, only a series of loops, and escape would have been possible, if uncomfortable. But that was the last thing on his mind when the silver was biting the delicate skin of his wrists, and Severus was standing naked in front of him.

The Slytherin's body was a mess of scars: some burns, most cuts. Remus knew each and every one and hated to see a new one added. Severus smiled at him, a real smile (so rare, so cherished), and Remus smiled back. It was a lovely game, but the players were still human. Remus drank in the sight of the pale body before him. It was lanky and tall, fit but still slender. A trail of dark hair started below the naval, and led into a thicker thatch of hair, black as night. Jutting from the curls was a proud, reddened cock, desperate for attention and all for him. Remus knew the real power of the submissive position, and it was right there amidst those black curls, plain as day.

"Kneel, Lupin." The command was soft but immediately obeyed. He fell gracefully to his knees in a move of which he knew Severus was jealous. The taller man was awkward at times, his body growing too quickly to adjust, while Remus was still small and compact. Once on his knees, he strained his wrists to feel the silver and moaned at the sensation.

Severus tenderly cupped his cheek in one hand, stepping forward with his thick member in the other. Remus' mouth opened automatically, a pink tongue darting out to moisten his dry lips. He knew the movement was tracked when he saw a clenching in the abdomen of his lover. He would wait though, he knew well enough to wait. It would come soon, soon he could taste, and then, then....

"Remus," Severus whispered, and that was enough. He leaned forward and engulfed the waiting cock. Another day he might have taken his time, another day he might have teased, but right now, all he wanted was to taste this man, this strong, passionate, somehow fragile man. He took Snape as deeply as he could, which was not nearly deep enough. His hands clenched listlessly in their bonds, and he wished he was caressing the skin his eyes feasted upon.

Severus' hand was at the back of Remus' head, urging him forward to meet the restrained thrusts of his hips. His other hand stroked the kneeling boy's cheek, tenderly and unconsciously. Severus' head was thrown back as Remus danced his tongue around the sensitive crown, flicking it into the slit and tasting the salty offering there.

When Remus heard the growl from above him, he knew to back off. Severus wouldn't come in his mouth tonight...at least, not the first time. Remus regretfully pulled back, but was unable to leave that glistening cock without a final swipe from base to tip, and Severus gripped his chin in retaliation.

"Stand up, Lupin. I want to fuck you now," he said in a strained voice. Remus rose, knees cracking from their position on the unforgiving ground. His own cock bobbed, painful in its neglect, but Severus didn't seem to notice. He kissed Remus brutally, transferring all the erotic kisses Remus had placed upon his cock onto his own mouth, and Remus revelled in the attention.

"Please, Severus, fuck me. I want you, want you so much," he babbled, finding his voice and wanting to express himself but finding words wanting.

"So needy, aren't you? No one else can do this to you, can they?" He gently but firmly pushed Remus over the Professor's desk, the perfect height for what they both wanted.

"No one, Severus. No one, ever," he swore, allowing himself to be situated, the cold desk pleasantly chilled against his heated torso, his legs still tangled in his own pants, arms tied and tingling behind him.

"And you'll never let anyone else touch you, will you? You'll stay mine, won't you, Lupin?" Though his voice was soft, Remus knew there was fire beneath his words. Remus tried to articulate a response, but he felt a sharp nip to his buttock and knew Severus was on his knees behind him, and it was enough to render him speechless.

He moaned wordlessly as Severus trailed wet kisses over his arsecheeks, giving proper attention to each before placing a painfully soft kiss directly over his needy hole. Remus' cock twitched with desperation, but he couldn't even rub it against the side of the desk as Severus gripped his hips tightly.

"I'm yours, I'm yours," he chanted softly, needing Severus to know, to know that Remus knew he was the *only* one who could deserve the cool Slytherin on his knees, he was the only one who earned such dirty, hot treatment from his passionate and demanding lover.

"That's right, Lupin. Mine. Don't forget it, no matter what happens, *no matter what*." His words were insistent, almost pleading, but Remus couldn't answer when Severus finally used his tongue on his entrance, tracing it softly, almost lovingly. Remus cried out softly when Severus' teeth scrapped lightly over the ring, nibbling on it before thrusting his tongue through, forcing Remus to take the muscle, though he wouldn't deny it for anything.

One of Severus' hands came up to close over his captured wrists, pressing the chain ever deeper into his sore flesh, at the same time he pressed a spit-slicked finger into Remus' wet hole. Remus shook with sensation, knowing he could come in moments if Severus continued to thrust with his finger as he was. Another finger was added, and they scissored to stretch the ring of muscle, but not too much. Severus knew exactly how much Remus relished the tight burn of an almost-too-tight fit, and Merlin knew the Slytherin relished it just as much.

When fingers gently stroked his prostate, Remus jerked forward and sobbed once. The rhythmic pressing of his bonds and the matching thrust of fingers was bringing Remus rapidly to completion, and his body ground forward, cock thrusting into nothing, cheek pressed against the sweaty surface of the desk.

"Severus, I'm not...I can't..." he ground out, desperate to come with the other man and not alone.

"Can't what, wolf?" Severus teased, both with his voice and his hands.

"Can't hold on... please, fuck me. Oh, gods, please."

Fingers slipped from his body and went to encircle his cock, but instead of stroking it, they closed around the base to hold of his imminent orgasm.

"You know I can't deny you anything," Severus chuckled as he lined up his cock to the twitching hole, murmuring a Lubrication spell just as the stretch became too much, sliding halfway home in one hard thrust. Both men cried out at the feeling, and Severus ran his hand reverently between Remus' shoulder blades, soothing both of them with the gentle touches that contradicted the passion in their bodies.

"*More*," Remus begged, trying to rock back onto the thick cock impaling him. Severus leaned down to kiss where his hand had been stroking, moving his hips deeply. His pace was slow and sure; any faster and he would come much too quickly. Remus knew this and bore the pace, the hand on his cock still pinching off his orgasm, and he was grateful for it.

Severus pulled out and thrust back in, impossibly deep, and upon bottoming out, ground insistently into Remus' hole, and his body jerked at the stimulation of his prostate. Severus grabbed his shoulder and hauled him up so he back was against Severus' chest, and his chin was grasped tightly and turned sideways, as Snape engaged him in an awkward but completely satisfying kiss that was all tongues and teeth. Snape jerked his hips in shallower thrusts, one hand holding his chest so their bodies were firmly pressed together. They were both slicked with sweat and completely mindless. Remus' arms were pressed between them painfully, and the added pressure on his restraints sent shockwaves through his body. With every jerk of Severus' hips, the silver burned anew.

"Severus, Merlin, so good," Remus moaned, his head falling back onto Severus' chest as the man pumped into him relentlessly.

"I'm going to come, wolf, I'm going to fill you. Fuck, you feel so good, so tight. So perfect. Made for me, Remus. You were made for me." His words were punctuated by near-desperate movements, and Remus recognized the use of his first name as the catalyst behind Severus' orgasm. The black-haired man shouted as he came, thrusting so deeply Remus felt it in his heart, and he loosed his grip on the werewolf's cock. Remus cried as his orgasm tore through him, his body tightening and shaking with the delay. His come anointed the teacher's desk as his body was overwhelmed with sensation.

Severus held him tightly for a few moments as they came down from their high, enveloping him in his arms even as his spent cock slipped from Remus' body. Remus bit his lip as he felt come trickle out of his hole and down his thigh. The taller man gently unwound the chain that had encircled Remus' wrists, leaving behind a raw-looking red burn; it would fade in a few days, thanks to his advanced healing, but Remus knew he would be fingering it to remember the sweet sting until it faded away. Severus let him go to get his clothing, and Remus watched him. The thoroughly flushed Slytherin put his trousers on and took a white handkerchief from his pocket. He gently cleaned the come from Remus' body, careful of his sore entrance. Remus smiled softly at the sweet treatment, knowing again he was the only one who ever saw this side of Severus, and he would jealously guard that distinction with everything he had.

Remus dressed quickly, knowing he would be missed if he stayed away much longer. James especially seemed to question his whereabouts these days, and Remus wanted to keep his secret as long as possible. Severus didn't want to be public, and Remus didn't disagree. He did dream of a time and place where Severus would hold his hand in public, take him on dates, and introduce him as his boyfriend. But Remus was used to being denied what he wanted, and he would take what he could get for as long as it lasted.

Once dressed, their gazes met, and like magnets, they came together in an embrace that, in retrospect, would always feel like a goodbye. Severus tilted Remus' chin up for a lingering kiss, sweeping and gentle, his tongue caressing the smaller boy's with distinct affection. Severus broke the kiss and touched his forehead to Remus', closing his eyes. Remus tried to shake the feeling that Severus was trying to say something, do something, and just enjoyed being held.

Severus let go first, as always. He gathered the silver chain and spelled it back to its original size, reattaching his pocket watch and checking the time. His eyes met Remus' again, and the werewolf nodded. It was time to go.

Severus kissed him one last time, a searching kiss. Remus hoped he found what he was looking for there. When he went to walk away, Remus whispered, "Severus. I... I want to say, I..."

Remus bit his lip and looked away. He wanted to say it for the first time, but it felt like the last time, and Remus couldn't bear it.

A hand grasped his, and it was pulled to Severus' lips. He kissed the burn on his wrist and smiled softly, if a little cynically.

"I know. Me, too."

And then he was gone, and Remus pinched the burn on his wrist once, closing his eyes against the immediate flood of memories and renewed desire. He let Severus get a decent head start before leaving to return to his own room.

A whispered password and short walk up the stairs, and then he was in his room. He took a moment to take in the surroundings. His friends. His very best friends, the only people who had ever accepted him, who had ever wanted him. They knew his secret and loved him anyway. But despite their loyalty and friendship, what he felt with Severus was even more than that. Severus knew too, and not only did he accept, he *embraced*. He didn't care that Remus was a wolf, didn't care that Remus liked pain, didn't care that Remus was scarred. He mixed all those things together to mark him with silver that burned. Severus was the amalgamation of every secret desire, every unfulfilled want, and he would never give that up.

Sirius was lying on his back, arms strewn above his head and legs spread haphazardly, sheet rucked around his waist and twisted in his legs. A small smile was on his lips and Remus could only guess at the debauchery of his dreams.

Peter was curled up on his side in a tight foetal position. His leg kicked out once before tucking back up. He was lying atop the covers, with pillows on either side of him like a nest.

James was... staring at him.

Remus startled slightly before smiling at his dormmate. James was waiting for him. It wasn't unusual, he'd been paying special attention to Remus lately, and though it unnerved the smaller boy, he was secretly pleased that James thought him special enough to warrant the notice. But James did not return his smile and Remus' fell from his lips.

"Late night, Moony?" James asked innocently, but with malice in his eyes. Remus walked to his bed, undressing to his boxers and getting in. He'd wanted a shower, but with James watching it might be suspicious, like he was trying to hide something. Which he was, of course. His boxers felt grimy with a trickle of come that hadn't been cleaned by his lover, but Remus didn't mind it too much.

"Just studying a bit, Prongs. And then I grabbed some food from the kitchen since I missed dinner." His voice was steady and quiet. James came over and sat on Remus' bed with him, the latter under the covers to the waist.

"We went to the library, but we couldn't find you."

"I wasn't in the library. I was in an old classroom. Much quieter." Easier to track the truth than lies.

James looked at him intently. "What happened to your arms, Remus? Those look bad." He sounded concerned, but he reached out to touch the burn, and Remus withheld a gasp of pain.

Remus was starting to get nervous at the casual tone his friend was using. He'd witnessed the other boy do it to others enough to know when he was being baited.

"I dunno, allergic reaction, I think. Doesn't hurt. Anyway, I'm tired. Can we talk in the morning?" He feigned a yawn.

"Sure. Just one thing though. Was Snivellus studying with you?"

"What, Snape? No, I was by myself." He paused as if in thought. "Oh, but he did stop by a minute. I think he was following me. He didn't stay long, just enough to make sure I wasn't doing anything untoward, I think." He laughed awkwardly, hoping that was enough truth to avoid getting caught.

James went over to his own bed and grabbed both the map and his invisibility cloak. He placed them both on Remus' bed before sitting down again. "Yeah, because when we checked the map, you were there with Snivellus. So close together we thought you were in a fight! We were worried, Moony."

Remus swallowed hard. "Well, you know how he likes to get into other peoples' personal space. He left easily enough."

"Yeah, I know. See, Padfoot and I were worried, like I said. So we took this," he patted the cloak, "And went to the room you were in. We saw him leave easily enough. Right after he raped and tortured you, that is."

Remus gasped. That was so much worse than being caught. "James, he didn't rape me! Listen, I'm sorry I didn't tell you, but you must understand why. I really care about him. I know you can't understand that, but it's true. And he cares about me. Please, don't be mad."

James patted Remus' hand on the coverlet. "I'm not mad at you, Moony. I knew something was going on. I wish you'd told us, so we could put a stop to it before it got to be

too late. But it stops now, yeah? I don't care that you're gay or whatever, but you can't see him anymore. You can do so much better."

Remus shook his head, tears starting to form. "No, I want him. I won't stop seeing him just because you ask me to. You're my best friend, but I...I love him, James." He exhaled deeply, feeling a warmth start inside him just at saying the words aloud for the first time. *I love him.*

James shook his head. "I know you think you love him, but it's not true. He's using you, we just know it. And he's hurting you! Don't deny it. So, if you see him again, we'll tell Dumbledore that Snape is hurting you, holding you against your will, raping you."

The young werewolf was shaking with anger. "Dumbledore won't believe you once I tell him the truth! You can do that to Severus, to me! Why, James? Why are you doing this?"

"Because we *love* you, Moony! We only want the best for you. You're confused, that's all. Snape must have fed you a love potion or something!"

"No, you don't want me to be happy. You're jealous or something! Well, I don't care. I'll deny whatever you say, and Dumbledore will believe me over you."

"I didn't want it to come to this," James said, sighing. "But if you keep seeing him, *we will* tell Dumbledore. And if you deny it, well... we've kept your secrets a long time, Moony. Something might eventually come out."

Remus was aghast. He looked at James in disbelief, fingers clenching on the sheets. "Are you saying that if I don't break up with Severus, you'll tell about my lycanthropy?" His eyes were glittering and he couldn't believe he'd never seen this side of James. *But you have seen it...every single time Severus was around.*

"Of course not!" he denied. "Just that... you know. Things happen. But we love you, and we will protect you. We're the only ones you need. The sooner you realize that, the happier we will all be. Do we have an understanding?"

Remus let the tears slip down his cheeks when he closed his eyes, jerking his face back when James wiped one away. He'd just finished telling himself he would do *anything* to keep Severus, but it wasn't true. If his secret got out, all the hard work he'd done over the years would mean nothing. His status as prefect, his excellent grades, and his perfect references would mean naught once the world knew. He would have to register with the Ministry, and he would never get into an apprenticeship or be accepted into any positions he deserved. It would haunt him for the rest of his life.

"I will *never* understand, James. I will never forgive you. But I will do what you want. You need to know that you've taken away my only chance at happiness. Nothing will ever be the same between us." His voice shook with suppressed rage, and he hated himself for his weakness while mourning his loss.

"You'll come around, Moony, you'll see. You'll thank us when you're happier with a nice, friendly guy who cares about you, who is gentle with you like you deserve, and you'll wonder what you ever saw in that prick." He smiled in what Remus might have previously thought was kindness but now just looked like triumph and got into his own bed. Remus looked around wildly, unable to believe how his life had just fallen apart, when his eyes settled on Sirius. He was sitting up in his bed, grey eyes searching Remus'.

He got up and crossed the floor to sit on Remus' bed, just as James had. Remus looked at him pleadingly, but knew there would be no quarter.

"It's for the best, Remus. You'll see," he murmured, stroking a warm hand down Remus' tearstained cheek. "It's because we love you," he added. Remus was speechless.

Sirius leaned forward and placed a soft kiss on Remus' lips, longer than necessary, and Remus jerked back as if burned. Sirius smiled softly and returned to his own bed.

Three different sets of snores sounded before long. Peter's whistling wheeze, James' abrasive cacophony, and Sirius' soft exhalations and occasional groan.

Remus' hitching cries added to the noise long into the night. In the morning, each Marauder pretended not to see his puffy, red eyes and the dark circles beneath them. He allowed himself to be led to the Great Hall, where Sirius sat beside him with an arm over his shoulder and altogether too closely.

Severus met his eyes across the room, looking accusatory and hurt. Remus could only shake his head in defeat and look away. Severus glared at him throughout the meal, but Remus only felt the weight of the stare, unable to meet it. Sirius led him from the hall with a hand on the small of his back.

Two weeks later, an owl brought a small package to Remus at the table during dinner. He put it in his pocket without even looking at it and allowed Sirius to take him by hand to their dorms.

When he got up after everyone else was asleep that night, he went into the bathroom with the package. He opened it quietly, wishing he could cry but entirely devoid of the necessary liquid after the last two weeks. He sobbed dryly, holding the pocket watch in his hand tightly, allowing the burn to overtake him. When the pain, no longer fuelled by adrenalin and lust, became too much, he opened the familiar timepiece.

Inside, over the ancient monogram of the Prince family, words were scratched into the silver as though by a pocketknife or some other crude instrument.

"No one else."

Fin.