

Lycanthropy

by Hanagasume

A tiny bite - A mate for life. HGRL, written for the Granger Enchanted Fuh-Q-Fest.

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Chapter 1 of 1

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The moon was whole and shining brightly in the sky with only the creatures of the night out and about to enjoy and bask in the splendour of it. It was nearing the last few hours of the full moon already, and as soon as the dawn came, so too, would the children of the night have to return to their places of hiding. The children of the moon, too, would once more take their human forms and be allowed the peaceful slumber they longed for even in the form of an uncontrollable beast.

It was the kind of peaceful slumber that Hermione Granger was longing for.

For two years she had been tormented by the curse that came with becoming a werewolf. She had been so careful in the Final Battle, protecting Harry and Ron, and protecting herself. But it had not been enough. And so, years after the Dark Lord took his final breath, she was still suffering from the effects of his reign. It had only taken one tiny bite from a werewolf she had been unable to recognize transformed into his wolf form to cause the change in her body. Her cells had mutated violently within her, and one month later, she transformed for the very first time.

Harry and Ron were never to know what had happened in the Shrieking Shack that night. It was a secret she kept close to her heart. Nobody, with the exceptions of Madam Pomfrey and Severus Snape, would ever know the true extent of her injuries if she had her way. She needed Snape to brew the Wolfsbane Potion for her to drink every month. While initially it had only been business between the two, the pair had eventually formed a kinship both were no longer whole after the destruction of Voldemort's period of influence. Every month when the full moon rose, Hermione would stay at Spinner's End, curled up in the guestroom.

In the same way that most werewolves were unable to maintain a steady job, Hermione found that she, too, was no longer fit to work properly in the real world, especially as she had not become fully accustomed to the transformation. It took a hard toll on her body, and she still needed a few days after the full moon to regain her strength. She had become Snape's apprentice a year after she had been bitten.

During the month, when she was fit enough to care totally for herself, Hermione lived in a flat in Muggle London and visited her parents and friends regularly enough not to arouse suspicion. Nobody had even noticed the subtle change in the colour of her eyes from the plain brown they had been to the rich amber of a werewolf. She was certain that while they could have accepted her problem, Hermione had no wish to burden anyone. Harry and Ginny had only married two months beforehand, and Ron was busy playing Quidditch for the Chudley Cannons.

As the sun began to rise just beyond the horizon, Hermione felt herself transforming slowly from beast to woman once more. Her bones returned to normal size, and soon enough, the fur was totally gone and she stood as herself in the room. Sighing heavily, she unlocked the door to the room and made her way down the stairs. She would have a cup of tea and then sleep for a day. On reaching the kitchen, she found that Snape was still awake and had tea and a whole breakfast set out on the table. The

smell of fried eggs and tomatoes invaded her still-sensitive nose, making her stomach growl.

"You will need to eat before you go to sleep," Snape stated baldly, stirring his own tea as he flipped through the pages of a book he was perusing.

"You always take advantage of my heightened senses after the transformation," she replied, sitting down at the table across from him and digging into the food right away.

"Because you wouldn't eat otherwise," he said simply. "And if you don't eat, you won't regain your strength, and if you don't regain that, I will be short a pair of hands in the lab with all of my orders."

Hermione grinned around a mouthful of toast. "And here I thought it was because you cared about me," she said teasingly.

"Of course not," he replied with a smirk that belied his response.

After she had finished her food, Snape sent her back upstairs to the guestroom to sleep off her weariness from the night she had just gone through. It wasn't that she hadn't slept that drained her so much. It was the transformation to wolf and back that caused her body to wear out. After collapsing on the bed due to a sudden onset of exhaustion, Hermione passed out as soon as her head hit the pillow.

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The month passed quickly, and with it, her twentieth birthday. The Weasleys and Harry had thrown her a big party at Grimmauld Place. Even Snape had shown up and gifted her with her own leather-bound potions journal to write her experiments and notes in. It had been one of the best days she had had that month. Too soon, the full moon was on her again, and she was busily helping Snape with his potions orders while he carefully prepared the Wolfsbane for all of the werewolves he supplied on a monthly basis. The potion required a lot of attention and care, so having Hermione to do other things allowed him to focus on that.

On the day before the full moon, at least thirty of her kind would show up at the doorstep to Snape's house on Spinner's End, coming to collect their potions for the night to follow. By the time the sun had set, Hermione assumed everyone had come to collect their potions for the month, so she emerged from the basement lab to get something to drink. Just then, there was a knock on the front door. Snape, not realizing she was in the hallway, opened the door to reveal Remus Lupin.

Hermione knew that as soon as the door opened, there was no use hiding that she was there. While everyone knew that she worked for Snape, Remus had never been around while she had been spending time with her friends. This had come as somewhat of a relief to her as she knew from experience that werewolves could sense and smell other werewolves when they were nearby. And telling from the look Remus gave her once he had spotted her in the hall, her secret was no longer that.

'Hermione...' he said softly, idly brushing past Snape into the house. 'How did this happen to you?'

Snape gave her a look, silently asking if she needed him to get rid of Lupin for her, but she shook her head and walked with Remus into the kitchen. As soon as all three were seated with tea, Hermione took a deep breath and prepared to explain herself. There was no more hiding to be done as far as the older werewolf was concerned.

'It was the final battle. Everything was chaos. I got stuck in the Shrieking Shack with no way out but the top windows or the back door,' she said softly. 'I took the stairs and tried to get out through the back so I could come back to the battlefield to help everyone. One of the werewolves caught me and got a bite in before I could stop him. He was in his wolf form.'

'Why have you not told anyone about this?' Remus asked carefully.

'I didn't want to become a burden to anyone,' she said quietly. 'Severus offered me his help, and Madam Pomfrey knows as well. She treated my wounds, and I could not hide the injury from her.'

'Don't you trust Harry and Ron to stick by you? Don't you know that those two young men would do anything for you?' he demanded.

'Remus, I know what lengths they would go to for me, but suffice it to say that I would rather deal with this in my own way,' she said curtly, a little upset at the way he was speaking to her. 'I'm not a child anymore.'

Remus sighed and shook his head. 'No, you're not a child,' he agreed. 'But you don't want to end up like me, Hermione. These days, I don't even talk to my friends anymore. I lived in seclusion for so long before I came back in your third year. I don't want that to happen to you.'

'I can assure you, Lupin, that Hermione spends all of her free time with Tweedle Dum and Tweedle Dumber,' Snape said suddenly, breaking the tense moment between them.

Hermione gave him a grateful smile. 'You and I have had very different circumstances in our lives, Remus. You lived twelve years without your two best friends. I can tell that it was hard for you, but I won't push mine away from me.'

Remus nodded then and stood up. 'You and I are very different people, Hermione,' he said quietly. 'If only I had been as strong as you when I was your age.'

'I'm not strong,' she said. 'But I know what I want in life.'

He nodded, and Snape stood to get him his potion and walk him out. Just as he was about to leave, he stopped and looked at Hermione. 'You'll do well,' he told her. 'You've not changed a bit from that headstrong girl I taught.'

'More than you think,' she said, nodding and heading back down to the lab.

The full moon that month passed with no other drama. That night after Remus had left, Hermione had half expected Harry and Ron to come after her and bang down Snape's front door. Apparently, she had been worried for no reason. Remus obviously had not told anyone of her misfortune. She had breathed in relief when she realised that nobody was coming to see her and had gone back to living in her flat at night two days after the full moon had finally waxed and she had recovered.

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Two weeks after seeing Remus in Snape's house, Hermione was in Diagon Alley, doing a little shopping for some new quills and parchment and a new set of apprentice robes. She had been collecting potions ingredients with Snape the day before in the Forbidden Forest when one of the larger magical plants had not taken kindly to her running into it and had promptly torn her robes off and swallowed them whole. Needless to say, Hermione was just glad that it had only taken her robes.

She was just leaving Scrivenshaft's when the door tinkled, and in walked Remus Lupin from the cobblestone street outside. He looked about as surprised to see her there as she was him. He nodded at her briefly as she passed him and walked out. Hermione was already halfway to the other end of Diagon Alley before she heard her name being called out, and she turned to see Remus hurrying to catch up with her.

'Let me buy you lunch,' he insisted, panting to regain his breath.

Hermione raised an eyebrow curiously at him. 'Remus, I am perfectly capable of getting myself lunch,' she said simply.

He nodded and sighed. 'Look, I know that you are a perfectly capable woman, Hermione,' he said carefully. 'I just wanted to try to make up for my rudeness to you two weeks ago at Severus's house.'

'Oh,' she said softly, a small smile touching her lips. 'You don't have to do that at all. I should thank you, though, for not telling Harry and Ron about me.'

He waved her off. 'No need to thank me at all,' he said, offering her his arm, which she took. 'It's not my place to be telling secrets that are not mine to tell.'

He led her to the Leaky Cauldron, and they both ordered a roast lunch, sitting in a darkened corner booth to consume their meal. Hermione didn't mind being out-of-the-way, to be honest. She hated being in the spotlight all of the time; it made her uncomfortable. She had a bottle of Butterbeer sitting on the table next to her meal left untouched. The amber colour of the liquid reminded her all too well of the colour her eyes now were. She hated them. At one point in her life, she would have given anything to have unusual eyes. But right then and there, she would give anything to have her brown eyes again.

'You haven't even touched your food,' Remus told her softly, reaching over and covering her free hand with one of his.

Hermione started at his touch but relaxed and shook his hand away, patting it awkwardly. 'Sorry - I was in a world of my own for a while there,' she said, picking up her cutlery and beginning to eat.

They ate in awkward silence for another few minutes before Hermione couldn't take it anymore and decided to leave. She quickly ate the rest of her meal and placed some money on the table to pay for her share. Remus opened his mouth to say something, but she silenced him with a look he had no idea that she was capable of giving. It was a look that would have made Minerva and Severus proud.

'I'll need to be getting in to Severus's today to do some work,' she said as she brushed imaginary dust from her clothes. 'If I'm going to finish my apprenticeship by the end of this year, I'm going to need to get some more hours in.'

Remus nodded, not bothering to argue with her. He had heard what Hermione Granger was like when she was in a determined or bad mood, and he had no wish to have any more of a confrontation with her. He watched her leave with a trace of guilt before looking down at the remaining half of his meal. Not feeling as hungry as he had been earlier, he left the money on the table for both meals and walked out of the pub.

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After having arrived at Spinner's End, that afternoon passed quickly for Hermione. Snape put her to work immediately, not bothering to annoy or ask her about why she was in such a dark mood on her arrival. His calm acceptance of her and what she was soothed her, and after a little while of working in silent harmony, she was back to being in a reasonable mood once more. When she left that evening to go home to her flat, she was smiling again. It was not as though Snape had even been nice to her what made the most difference was that he simply allowed her to be herself.

The next two weeks passed in a blur, and soon enough, the full moon had come around once more. Hermione had spent a lot of time helping Snape with the Wolfsbane for that month as they had completed most of the monthly orders from the apothecaries he supplied throughout Europe. All of the werewolves that Snape supplied came through at some point during that day except for Remus, who, by six in the evening, still had not made an appearance. Hermione, having decided that he just wasn't coming, packed her things up and got ready to leave shortly before seven. She was just about to open the front door to leave when three short knocks came.

On opening the door, she found that it was Remus. He looked extremely tired and rumpled that month with large bags and dark circles around his eyes and some lines marring his forehead. Usually, Remus would look a lot healthier and more cheerful, but it appeared that since she had seen him last, his life must have gotten a whole lot more hectic. She opened the door wider to let him pass through, and instead of leaving as she had intended, she accompanied him to Snape's kitchen, where his Wolfsbane potion was waiting for him on the bench.

'You look like a wreck,' she told him honestly.

'I have been better,' he muttered, looking around to see if Snape was anywhere to be seen.

'He's down in the lab cleaning up,' Hermione answered his unasked question. 'You can just leave your payment with me, and I'll make sure he gets it.'

'Thanks, Hermione,' Remus said, handing her a small pouch.

Hermione nodded and went over to a cupboard, opening it and adding the pouch to a box full of the Wolfsbane payments for the day. That having been done, she made to leave for the evening once more only to be stopped by Remus at the front door again.

'Hermione, I know that you're probably still mad at me about last month, and I'm sorry,' he said quietly, looking into her eyes. 'I don't want this bitterness between us.'

Hermione sighed, knowing she really should let it go. Taking in his shabby appearance once more, she found the strength in her to set her anger aside. He really did look like he had gone through a rough time in the last two weeks. Frowning in concern, she touched his shoulder.

'What happened to you these last two weeks?' she asked curiously.

'I've... well, you're bound to find out about it sooner or later, so I might as well tell you,' he said with a heavy sigh. 'Tonks has been going through a rough time of it at the Ministry because of me, so we mutually decided to part ways. She's quite upset about it still, as am I, but I moved out of our shared flat and found one of my own in Diagon Alley just this week.'

'Oh, Remus, I'm so sorry,' she said, feeling sadness for the older man.

He waved her off and shook his head. 'Don't be sorry it was hardly your fault that it happened,' he said quietly. 'It was just a matter of time before she realised that being my partner was going to be a burden for her. I have no regrets about our relationship it's just a shame; that's all.'

Hermione nodded. 'It was the same with me and Ron back when we tried dating,' she said softly. 'We just weren't meant for each other.'

Remus nodded and opened the front door, gesturing for Hermione to go through first. After it closed behind the two of them, they walked to the park across from Snape's house to Apparate.

'I likely won't see you around until at least next month when I come for my potion,' Remus said quietly. 'If I don't, I wish you a happy November.'

'The same,' Hermione said, spinning on one foot and out of sight.

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True to his word, Remus remained scarce during the whole of November with only Arthur Weasley having corresponded with him once during that entire time. Hermione found herself a little worried about him. She felt certain that whatever it was that was keeping him away, his break-up with Tonks had something to do with it. When the next full moon finally came around, she waited with bated breath for Remus to show up to collect his potion. Even Snape had questioned her nerves, but she had just waved his query off and gone about doing her work, despite all the anticipation.

He showed up even later than usual at around eight that night, looking only a little less haggard than the previous month. But Hermione was relieved to see some improvement. She knew that she looked like a wreck that month from worrying over the man. For some reason, she had been experiencing morose thoughts a lot that month. For some reason, every dream and nightmare she had ever had since being bitten kept coming back to haunt her. And for some reason, it was always about the night she had been bitten. There was just something so familiar about the seemingly unremarkable werewolf that had turned her.

'You look dreadful,' she told him in a teasing manner, even though it was more fact than fiction.

'You look like you haven't been sleeping well, if at all,' he replied, not bothering to joke about it to her.

'It's been a tough month,' she said truthfully.

'Has Severus been working you too hard over here?' he asked, pulling out his pouch of money to pay for his potion.

'No, he doesn't really set a time for me to show up or leave,' she answered. 'I just come and go as I please. It's up to me how quickly or slowly the apprenticeship goes, but I come whenever I know he has a larger order, and I usually show up for regular work hours except for when I'm ill after the full moon.'

'Well, at least I won't have to lecture Severus about mistreating his employees,' he said with a rusty chuckle.

Hermione nodded. 'Well, I'm most likely going to be staying here tonight, now,' she said softly. 'It's been a big day, and I don't really fancy splinching myself.'

'Understandable,' he said quietly with a nod. 'Well, I had better be getting home myself. Perhaps after you have recovered, you might consider having dinner or lunch or even coffee with me?'

Hermione smiled. 'I would like that,' she replied. 'When I am better, I will owl you and let you know when I am free, and we can work out the details then.'

Remus left with a smile and a nod. Once he was out the door, Hermione closed it and walked back to the kitchen with an extra spring in her step. She was surprised to run into Snape, who was coming up from the lab. He looked at her smiling face with a raised eyebrow, to which she responded with a shrug. Shaking his head, he followed her into the kitchen, where they shared dinner in mostly silence.

'What is it between you and the werewolf?' he grumbled suddenly as they were eating their pea and ham soup.

Hermione looked at him, astonished. 'Whatever do you mean by that, Severus?' she asked, feeling mildly affronted by the way he had said "werewolf".

'What I mean, Hermione, is what do you mean by accepting dinner proposals and other such outings from a man who only ended a bad relationship with another woman little over a month ago?' he asked plainly.

'It's not a date, Severus,' she snapped, frowning at him. 'And if it were, it would be no business of yours what I do and do not do in my spare time.'

'I was only trying to be concerned, Hermione,' he said gruffly. 'That is what friends do for each other be concerned.'

Hermione smiled at that for a moment. 'Severus, I had no idea you were so sentimental,' she teased, reaching across and patting his hand. 'I thank you for your concern, but I am certain that Remus is just being friendly and he could use a friend and someone to talk to during this time.'

Snape nodded. 'Just be sure you know what it is that you are doing,' he said softly.

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A week after the full moon, Hermione decided to send an owl to Remus. It was a Friday, and as the weekend was nearing and she would not be working, she figured seeing him wouldn't hurt. Her feelings over the last week had been very confusing to her. Her visions of the night she had been bitten kept repeating themselves over and over in her sleep, tormenting her and making her restless. She also kept seeing Remus, and then she would be dreaming and seeing visions of the night back in her third year when Remus had not taken his potion and had transformed.

Her recollection of that was faint at best and so fragmented that she couldn't even remember what he had looked like as a werewolf. And for some reason, it was important, and she wanted to figure out why all of this was at the forefront of her mind. A few hours after she had owled Remus, he sent a reply. He suggested dinner the night after and said that he was happy to make a booking somewhere if she consented. Hermione replied in the affirmative and went to sleep that night wondering what the next day would bring.

She went through the whole of Saturday eagerly waiting for dinner that night. She couldn't understand why she was feeling that way and why, all of a sudden, she found Remus attractive, but she couldn't fight the way she had been feeling. It was as though these strange dreams and this attraction to him had resulted from seeing him those few months ago.

And what made things worse was that Snape seemed to know what was going on better than she.

At exactly seven o'clock, the doorbell to her flat rang, and she pressed the buzzer to allow Remus into the building from the front entrance at the bottom of the stairs. She lived on the fourth floor of a five-storey building. Soon he was knocking on the door to her flat, and after making sure she was presentable, she went and answered it, ready to go out to dinner. She had butterflies in her stomach, and when she opened the door to allow him entry, she was stunned by how handsome Remus looked.

'You look lovely, Hermione,' he said, taking her hand and placing a gentle kiss on the top.

Hermione couldn't stop the blush from rising to her cheeks. 'Thank you. You look very nice also,' she stammered.

They left her flat and Apparated to a park, and from there, they walked to a restaurant that was nearby. Dinner was a pleasant affair. Remus asked Hermione more about her apprenticeship, and soon enough, Hermione felt as comfortable around the man as she ever had before their disagreement. They passed on dessert and had coffee before Remus Apparated them in tandem back to the park across from Hermione's flat. Instead of escorting her straight upstairs, though, he suggested they take a walk.

'Hermione, I've been having a lot of strange visions and dreams during the last couple of months,' he said, causing her to frown at him in confusion. 'At first, they just seemed like regular nightmares to me. I have nightmares all of the time, but last month, everything started to get worse and make me curious.'

Hermione felt her breath catch in her throat. Was it possible that Remus was having the same dreams as she had been? 'I see,' she said, gesturing for him to continue.

'Well, I know this may sound strange, but you were in nearly all of them, save for the few dreams I had in the beginning,' he said softly, staring at the ground.

'What happened? In these dreams of yours, what happened?' she asked curiously.

'I bit you and turned you,' he whispered shamefully, hanging his head.

More than a minute passed without either of them saying anything. Remus was too ashamed of his own visions to speak. To even think that he might have had something to do with Hermione's condition made him feel sick with himself. Hermione, meanwhile, was off in a world of her own, her dreams from the last few months rushing back to her and spinning through her mind like a kaleidoscope of only dark colours and images. She could almost feel the bite again, the throbbing in her shoulder increasing as the minutes passed, and it was in that moment that she knew.

The nightmares that both she and Remus had been experiencing were real.

'You hadn't taken your potion that night,' she choked out, feeling like the ground might come up to meet her if she didn't sit down. 'It was horrible everyone had been fighting but was still out looking for you...'

Remus shook his head, tears coming unbidden to his eyes. 'I know your scent... It's all my fault your scent was unmistakable...' he muttered, staring at the ground and shrinking away from her. 'I should have been more careful... It should never have happened at all.'

Hermione's head snapped around to look at him, and she took a step towards him, reaching out for him with a slender hand. 'Remus, you didn't mean to do it,' she said softly, flinching when he pulled further away from her. 'You had no control everyone had been too busy to make sure you had taken the potion... It wasn't just you.'

'It was my responsibility to ensure I was not a danger to anyone other than who I chose,' he said in a loud, angry voice, startling her. 'I've destroyed your chance of ever having a normal life, Hermione!'

'Life has never been normal for me, Remus!' she shouted at him, throwing her arms up in frustration. 'From the time I was growing up to right here with you, life has never been normal for me! I don't blame you for the way I am...'

'Hermione...' Remus murmured softly, looking up at her then with the guiltiest expression she had ever seen.

'I want you to go home, Remus,' she said firmly. 'And I don't want to see you again until you can see that I don't blame you for any of this. I want the next time I see you to be happy. I want to smile with you, and I want you to be able to look at me without having that guilty expression on your face.'

Without another word, Hermione turned on her heel and walked back up to her flat, not looking around to see if he had left yet or not. What she had said hurt her more than she could express in words, and she knew that it had hurt him too. When she was finally inside her warm flat, she shed her coat and hung it up before heading to her bedroom and slipping out of the little black dress she had worn out that night. Sighing, she pulled on her pajamas and collapsed straight onto the covers, exhausted. She felt like a dead weight had been dropped on her, and she only just managed to summon enough energy to wriggle under the covers before falling asleep.

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'Hermione?' said a voice from beside her.

Hermione blinked rapidly, turning to look at Harry. He had a concerned look in his bright, green eyes and was leaning against the door of the library in Grimmauld Place. He entered the room and sat down directly across from her, his gaze holding her captive in the chair that she was burrowed into. She stared at her hands folded in her lap, a book resting just beneath them. She fiddled with the leather of the cover in distraction.

'You've been acting really strange for the last couple of months, Hermione,' he said seriously. 'I didn't want to say anything about it before because I had hoped it was just something small, but now I feel like you're hiding something.'

Hermione sighed. It had been two weeks since she had sent Remus away from her. But it had been years since she had started to slowly push Harry and Ron away from her. Swallowing hard, she looked up at him and slowly let out a breath, getting ready to spill the biggest secret she had ever kept to the ones she had tried to hide it from the most.

'I have been dishonest with you, Ron and everyone else,' she said quietly. 'I didn't want to tell you because it was my problem, and I didn't want to slow you down or hold you all back from everything you wanted in life.'

Harry reached a hand over and placed it on top of hers. 'You could never be a burden to me, Hermione,' he said warmly, urging her to continue.

Hermione nodded and took another breath to continue. 'I got hurt a lot worse during the final battle than I had let on when you two boys had asked me,' she continued warily. 'I went to Madam Pomfrey, and then Severus got involved. They were the only two who knew about it these past years until recently.'

'What happened?' Harry asked.

Hermione closed her eyes and tucked her hair behind her ears, leaned closer to Harry, and then opened them again. 'Look at my eyes, Harry,' she told him, imploring him to forgive her through their amber depths.

He gasped quietly, pulling back a little and squinting to see if it changed anything if he looked at them differently. 'You're a... but when did this happen? I swear Ron and I barely had you out of our sights...' he stammered.

Hermione shook her head. 'I lost you boys for a while, and I was at the Shrieking Shack,' she said quietly. 'The wolf just came out of nowhere and bit me. It wasn't a huge bite but it was enough to turn me.'

'Was it Greyback?'

'It was Remus,' she answered, looking back at the book in her lap. 'He had no control his potion had been forgotten, and I was able to Stun him for long enough to get away.'

Harry nodded, accepting this without question. He loved Remus like family, after all, and knew he would not be capable of purposely harming her. 'Does he know?' Harry asked.

'I told him two weeks ago, and he felt it was true,' she said quietly. 'He knows the scent of his mark on me now, and he felt so guilty. I told him I didn't want to see him until he was ready to forgive himself.'

'Well, that explains why he isn't here tonight then,' Harry murmured.

Hermione nodded and looked over to the windows. 'I'm scared about everything,' she admitted softly. 'I'm his mate, and he knows it too. We can't be parted from each other for too long so he will have to get over it eventually.'

'Wow,' he said with a small grin. 'You being Remus's life mate is going to be really hard to swallow. I mean, it's harder for me than knowing you're a werewolf. How do you know you're his mate?'

'According to the history of the werewolf, if a male or female wolf bites a wolf of their own gender, no change other than monthly transformations will occur unless both wolves are inclined towards one another,' she started quietly. 'But then it goes on to say that if a male or female wolf bites one of the opposite gender, they will become soul-bonded and life mates if they are that way inclined.'

'So what you're saying is that because both you and Remus are straight, you both immediately became bonded' Harry asked.

'Precisely,' she answered firmly. 'The mutating gene likely sensed that neither of us was mated with another werewolf, and as he had bitten me, it seemed only right to be life-mates.'

Harry shook his head and sighed. 'This is way too complicated for one night,' he said with a smile. 'But for what it's worth, I have your back if you ever need it.'

Hermione nodded and stood to hug her friend, pleased that someone was taking it well.

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The next week passed quickly, and soon the full moon was upon the moon children once more, bringing them flocking to Spinner's End for their dosage of the Wolfsbane Potion. Snape had worked her particularly hard that week for no particular reason, but Hermione did not question it. Who was she to question the Potions master after all? She went about her duties quietly and spoke only when necessary, becoming increasingly nervous as the full moon drew closer. She was scared that Remus would not come for his potion because she was there.

But when there came a knock on the door at seven that night, and Hermione was preparing to clean the lab, she rushed upstairs to answer the door before Snape could tell her to go. It was Remus, standing with his hands in his coat pockets, looking tired and sheepish. She opened the door wider to let him in out of the cold and led him to the kitchen for his potion and some tea.

'How have you been?' she asked, not bothering to look at him as she was preparing the tea things.

'I've certainly had better days,' he answered grimly, accepting the tea she gave him with a small, nervous smile.

'You look like you haven't had a lot of sleep,' she pointed out, taking a seat and then a sip of her hot tea. 'And I know it's because of me, so would you just get over it and accept that we're supposed to be together?'

Remus sighed heavily. 'You deserve far better than me, Hermione,' he said calmly. 'You need someone young and whole, not an old broken wreck.'

'I don't want anyone else,' she said honestly. 'I've given this whole situation a lot of thought, and I can't imagine myself being happier with anyone else. You understand me and this better than anyone else! Make me your mate, Remus in every way.'

'I can't believe I am considering that,' he said with a dry chuckle. 'You are one hard woman to say no to, Hermione Granger.'

Hermione grinned. They finished their tea just as Snape was coming up from his lab to see why his apprentice had not gone back down. He raised an eyebrow at the pair curiously, poured himself a cup of tea, and then turned around and stalked out of the kitchen in that silent, intimidating way of his. Honestly, she personally thought the man could intimidate paint off of walls. She heard a door upstairs close, indicating that Snape had retired for the evening.

'Let's get out of here,' Hermione suggested, picking up the two remaining vials of Wolfsbane and stuffing them into the satchel she had brought with her. 'Come with me to my flat.'

Remus found that he could not deny her any more requests. While he was still overwhelmed with guilt, he knew that she was right. Fighting the inevitable had never been something that he practised, so he took her hand, and they Apparated together. The walk from the park to Hermione's flat was cool and refreshing, filling Remus with a hope he was unfamiliar with. And while he knew that they were going to her flat, he was unsure what she wanted from him that night.

It became quite clear, however, after Hermione dragged him straight through the sitting room into her own bedroom, that she did not just want to chat. She meant business. She carefully sat the vials in a holder beside her nightstand before kicking her shoes off and walking over to Remus. She kneeled down and gently eased his feet out of his shoes as well, yanking off his socks in the process to make it less awkward later. Once she stood up again, she opened her arms to him, tilting her face up just a little to let him know what she wanted.

Unwilling to turn down such an offer, he bent his head and kissed her gently on the lips, nibbling on the full bottom one for a moment before pulling back. Her pupils were becoming dilated, and she pinched that same bottom lip between her teeth for a moment, her eyes raking over him appreciatively. He felt a surge of male and animal pride at that. His senses were reaching their peak with the full moon lingering just around the corner. He closed in for another kiss, this one longer, gently exploring her mouth with lips, teeth and tongue.

Hermione pulled back and placed his hands on the bottom of the sweater she was wearing. 'You can undress me, you know,' she said, looking shy despite her bravado.

He nodded and swallowed, pulling the sweater up and over her head, leaving her standing before him in jeans and a white lace bra. It was simple, but it accentuated the lovely swell of her ample breasts. Her skin was pale and flawless, and she was petite with slim shoulders, a small waist, and womanly hips curves in all the exact places they should be. Unable to stand the teasing and glances, Hermione attacked his clothing with vigour, removing his sweater and shirt in one go and then tearing at his trousers.

Apparently her sex drive was one to rival his.

Remus stopped her from removing his pants and went to work on hers, kneeling to tug them down her legs, bunching her knickers distractedly with them as he went. Hermione took care of the bra herself, and once she was stood totally naked before him, he paused to look up and admire her beauty. Her slender legs were long and as pale as the rest of her, leading up to the neat triangle of curls guarding her loins. He could see moisture glistening and breathed in her scent deeply.

Aroused beyond the point of reason, he stood and grabbed her, dropping her on the bed before following her down. He kissed a path from her head to her toes, skirting around the places she wanted him most until he finally caved and licked and suckled a dusky nipple. He repeated the treatment on the other one, moving back and forth between the two until she was writhing and begging for more.

'Please, Remus!' she exclaimed breathlessly. 'More!'

He obliged and kissed down to her nether curls, licking and nipping his way to her clit before taking it into his mouth and flicking his tongue over it. She emitted a tiny squeak and squirmed uncontrollably until he had to grab her hips to steady her, and he licked his way down to the source of the dampness. Remus licked and teased her to the brink of orgasm several times before he finally gave her clit another hard lick, which sent her over the edge. The look of bliss on her face was amazing to him. Wiping his mouth on the back of his hand, he crawled back up her body, offering his mouth to her for a kiss.

She accepted hungrily despite her post-orgasmic state and tasted herself from his mouth, not concerned by it in the least. Once she was finally recovered, she pushed Remus over onto his back and resumed the task of undressing him, pulling his trousers and briefs off at the same time and tossing them over the side of the bed. For a split second before Hermione took his erection in hand, he was certain that he might have been able to put a stop to it then and there before they took it further.

But when her lips wrapped around the head of his prick and one of her hands pumped the rest of the length of his shaft, his mind became blank as any remaining blood went to where it was the hardest. He allowed her to continue in this manner until it all became too much for him, and he dragged her up his body, pressing his mouth frantically to hers and flipping her over onto her back. He nudged her legs apart with his knees, slotting himself between them and rubbing the head of his prick against her slick entrance.

'Last chance to change your mind,' he rasped out.

'Not a hope in hell,' she replied, grabbing his bum and pulling him into her, moaning as he filled her.

They paused for a moment to adjust, Hermione to his fairly reasonable size and Remus to her tightness. He withdrew most of the way before pushing back in, and slowly, they established a maddening pace. Hermione deliberately squeezed around him, and Remus' tempo unintentionally sped up until he was panting and moaning, his balls tightening painfully. Unable to stand it any longer, he came with a muffled howl, her own orgasm rippling around him as he spent inside her.

After a few minutes had passed, he rolled off her and Summoned his wand before casting a cleaning charm. Hermione snuggled into his side, and the duvet magically moved from under them to cover them completely. There was a faint glowing round the edge of the scar on her shoulder, and they both knew that after that, they were irrevocably mated for life. It was more bonding than a marriage itself.

'It'll be okay now, won't it, Remus?' Hermione asked as they slowly drifted off to sleep.

Remus nodded and kissed her forehead tenderly. 'It will be perfect, love,' he murmured into her hair, tightening his arms around her.

End.